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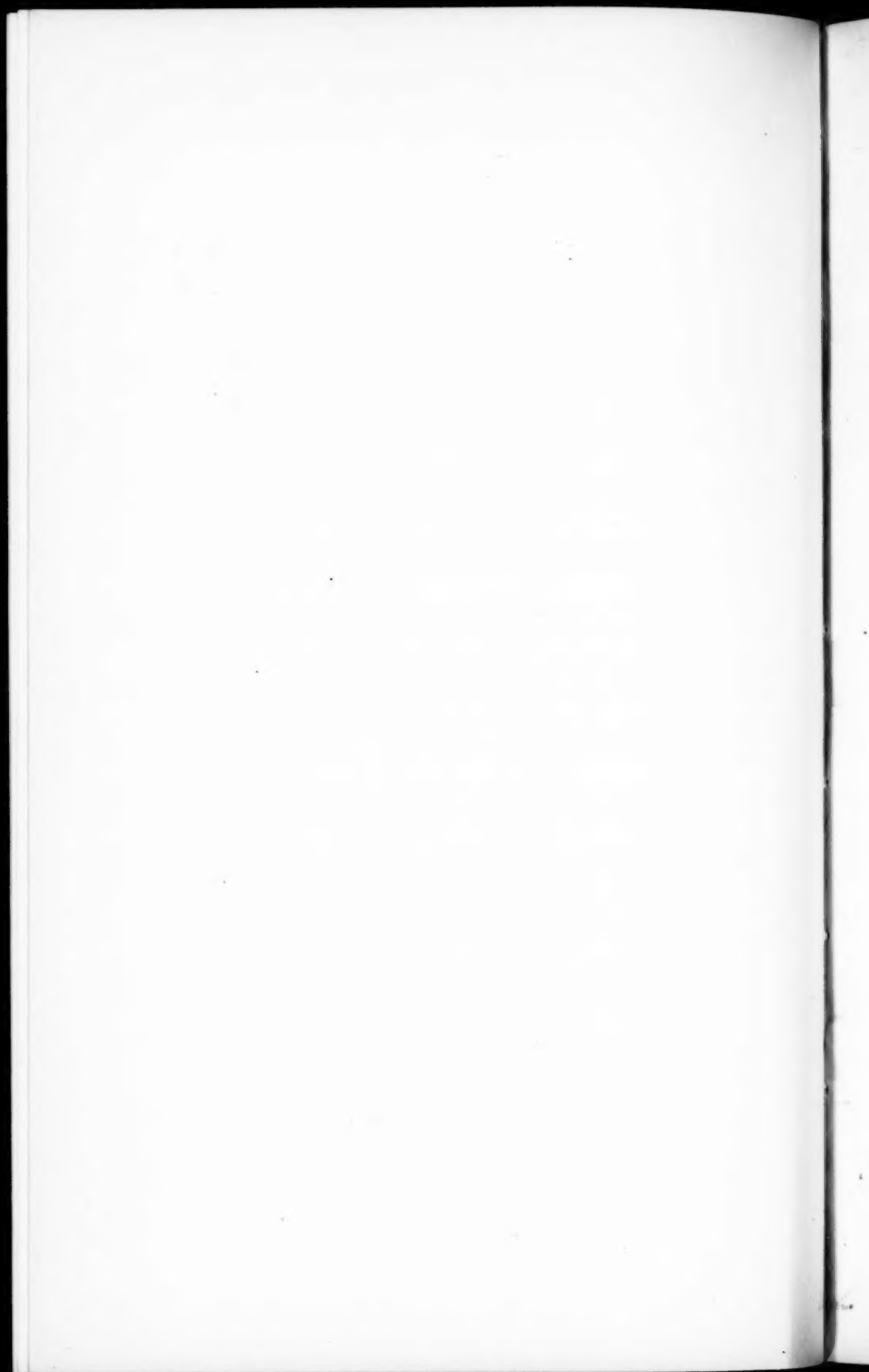
*A Psychoanalytic Journal
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The Identification

With The Machine *

by

Henry Harper Hart, M. D.

Associate in Psychiatry, Columbia University

Ever since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution the machine has been hailed by some as the savior, and by others, the destroyer of mankind. Men like E. M. Forster, Austin Freeman, Oswald Spangler, J. B. S. Haldane, Philip Gibbs and numerous others see man releasing a Frankenstein who may any minute hurl him into extinction. On the other hand, an equal number like Albert Parson Sachs, Gerald Stanley Lee, Will Durant, Charles A. Beard and all our Modern Captains of Industry see the machine as the humane liberator of mankind. Which is the truth?

Whether we like it or not the machine marches on. Invention excites invention and the multiplication of devices has rendered modern life inseparable from machinery. What changes in man is all this producing? They may be so insidious as to be almost imperceptible. Some of these changes it behooves us to examine—what sort of men are emerging from its all embracing influence? If something in man did not respond to the machine it could not have come to exercise this control over us.

*Read at the Schilder Society, April 24, 1952.

Let us first define a machine. According to Stuart Chase, the word itself comes from two words Man and Kina meaning power applied to a cylinder of wood. The Latin word "machina" comes from the Greek μηχανή which was a sort of device used on the stage for the raising or lowering of a God during a play. The Encyclopedia Britannica defines a machine as any device or apparatus for the application or modification of force to a specific purpose. Chase defines a machine as any non-living contrivance to extend or modify the power of the body, or to refine the perception of the senses.

Our captivation by the machine indicates its importance to us. An extension of our own body ego, it gives us increased power of movement, work and communication, like our heart, lungs, intestines, muscles—it does work—our work, and therefore is a part of us.

Man would not have devised machinery if he had not to do work, or avoid work. When the slave population was equal to the amount of work to be done no machinery was needed. Hence Egypt, Carthage, Greece and Rome needed no machines. They had plenty of slaves to do the work. Hero of Alexandria, a genius as inventive as Leonardo, produced a steam engine which was used only as a magical device to open and close the doors of a temple. There is a poetic irony about the fact that these first machines should have been devoted to the Gods! But Archimedes thought it disreputable to apply science to machinery, even though his engine kept the Romans out of Syracuse for three years.

So the machine is related to the slave, because it replaces the latter and becomes the passive, non-feeling executor of our will. Both slave and machine are dedicated to monotonous and exhausting toil. The mill owners of Manchester regarded the little children in their factories as machines that would wear out within 15 years. Those little children were for them merely human machines—to produce work—i.e. slaves.

All anthropologists agree that man is a tool using animal. This and his speech which enables him to communicate distinguishes him from the other animals. It was his nature to invent tools and weapons. That gave him power, both to build and to destroy. The first machine may well have been a log upon which a slab of stone was rolled, with less effort. The tool and the weapon gave him increased power — and when has man been willing to abandon power?

It is interesting to speculate to what extent man's machinery is an unconscious projection of his own physiological processes into the external world. Certainly the pump with its valves and chambers could easily be a projection of the heart. The bellows could be appreciated as a projection of the lungs. Hinges and sockets are simplified joints. The wiring and piping of our houses correspond to the nervous and excretory systems of the body. Our windows "look out on a view". Plumbers are always using anatomical terms like "nipples", "joints", "elbows", and male and female sex parts. Physicists like Wiener, McCulloch and others have been intrigued by man's nervous system and see electrical devices operating in similar fashion. The rhythm of most machines parallels the rhythm of physiological functions, each of which is specific to itself. Indeed, without man's aptitude for mechanics the discoveries of human physiology would not have occurred. Our bones are a system of levers in which force is applied between the fulcrum and the object to be moved. Even the sexual instinct has an automatism in its rhythm of expression, and like many machines, when once started is difficult to stop. Animals in heat are like machines in the grip of physico-chemical forces.

Man is so much of a machine that if he does not have hard work to do regularly he deteriorates—as the unemployment of the last depression shows. If we deplore the monotonous repetitiveness of the machine we should equally deplore the same features in the life of the average man from the dawn of history. Indeed this automatism of the machine

cannot be separated from that of instinct. The satisfaction of both are seen as ends in themselves. The machines in our factories turn out finished goods from raw materials, much as the liver manufactures and stores glycogen, and with as little awareness of ends and purposes. Men in those factories came to regard their machines with affection, even gave names to them, as they formerly did to their cattle. The drivers of planes, trucks, boats, tanks and trains personify their vehicles and refer to them as "she". Does not this indicate man's identification with the machine—but perhaps also a pathetic attempt to "humanize" it? Identification with the machine is even clearer in Schizophrenia, which we might even term the disease of the future. Here is stereotypy, passivity, inertia, and absence of feeling. The Schizophrenic even feels himself a machine, or influenced by a machine. Tausk described this depersonalized state so well in his article on the Influencing Machine. The regressive nature of automatism is convincingly demonstrated in the complete surrender of the Schizophrenic to the machine in himself. Tausk finds the machine a projection of the penis in the act of masturbation, and describes a man who dreamed of machinery and awoke to find his hand on his genitals. Machinery in dreams usually symbolizes the male genital, which with its erection and ejaculation is not only magical but productive. Sense of his own creative originality, flexibility of adaptation and personal identification is impaired in the Schizophrenic, who cannot distinguish between his own ego and the external forces operating on it. His lack of thought, his passivity, inertia and lack of personal identity are all features of the machine.

A schizoid young man, who derived his greatest feeling of security and importance from repairing refrigerators and who felt no need for the sexual companionship of a woman as long as he tinkered with these machines, talked with a flat monotony that was mechanical and insisted on bringing a recording machine into our interviews so that he could repeat our conversation over and over again to himself. In

his relations with girls, he was monotonous and mechanical. He felt a need to supply himself with enough funny anecdotes beforehand so as to amuse them. He always felt he would run out of conversation. As soon as he got an erection out of a prolonged and wordless clinch, he could not understand why the girls expected more of him. A woman was to him a machine that released sexual tension—nobody that required sympathy or understanding.

The tendency for schizoid personalities to feel more at home with machinery than with people indicates the defensive value of the machine. By its very passivity the machine is predictable—unlike woman—and it obeys man's will without requiring a discharge of effect. However complex the machine may be, it seems more reliable than woman and like masturbation, it can go on rhythmically by itself without understanding or sharing with others. Hence the use of his tools by the workman is a sublimation of masturbation, as his pride in his skill is derived from his pride in his organ. This autoerotic nature of the machine is expressed by the medieval preoccupation with perpetual motion, and thousands of attempts were made to devise such a machine. Here man seems to need to produce a living creature like himself that would go on indefinitely.

Habit is a psychic automatism that might be regarded as the original labor saving device. The learning of a new technique demands less and less thought and anxiety the more it is repeated,—and thus habit removes from an activity the effort of conscious attention. Habit, like the machine, is an automatism that saves effort but can beget helplessness. Thus to survive in the face of catastrophe demands the renunciation of habits. An example of automatism may be found in ants that have a game of follow the leader. If there is no leader and the line is made circular, they will go round and round until exhausted.

Thus the non-adaptive nature of automatism is laughable when not tragic. Bergson maintained that man was

ludicrous when he operated like a machine. He said that the attitudes, gestures, movements of the human body are laughable in exact proportion as that body reminds us of a mere machine. Probably man acts most like a machine when he is absent minded and the absent minded professor is the butt of many a joke. He unbuttons his vest and urinates in his trousers. He absent mindedly puts the neighbours' children to bed with his own. Schizophrenics because of their stereotypy and strange uncanny split-off automatisms often excite laughter among the laity, much as a phonograph will produce laughter and fear among primitives. But the machine is not always as funny as Bergson suggests. The ghastly, pathetic figures of Orwell's *1984* are the epitome of passivity and emptiness.

But before we blame machinery for making life dreary and monotonous, we must remember that man's monotony preceded the machine. India with her caste system was more rigid and ruthless than the modern machine age. Likewise China for thousands of years produced a monotonous and wasteful civilization without any benefit of machinery. In other words, man was a machine before he invented the machine. The average man welcomes monotony and familiarity—he avoids the strange and the new. The coming of the machine has speeded up social change and has for that reason alone evoked his hostility. With more leisure than ever before, man is obliged to think of less monotonous and more creative outlets for pleasure if he is to escape his own passive inertia. Thousands of monotones are still obliged to escape their own emptiness by getting drunk on week ends — but many more thousands are building their own homes. When we blame the machine for the dreary monotony and ugliness of modern life, we must ask, who is running the machine? Power in the hands of the stupid is tragic; in the hands of the intelligent, a blessing.

We have enough evidence to believe that the machine is the projection of man's own slavish passivity. Little won-

der then that he resents it when it appears before his outward vision. Like the pot he finds the kettle blacker than himself. Like the Catholic Totalitarian he finds the Communist Totalitarian an object of dread and hate. We hate most that which we dread and hate in ourselves. Hence the same reason for which we love the machine is that for which we hate it — namely, identification.

To understand the meaning of the machine we must understand why it had to wait till the 18th century before it could change our entire civilization. If men had lived for so many centuries in monotonous security, why was it the 18th century, and above all 18th century England, that was the time and place of its inception? Why did not the Industrial Revolution begin in Periclean Athens, or in Rome under Julius Caesar; why not in medieval or Renaissance Venice with its great trade expansion? Why did not Spain with her great 16th century Empire turn to machinery?

The compulsion to amass wealth and to make fortune was not peculiar to 18th century England, but at no time in history had a small, intelligent, thrifty and self denying race of people come suddenly into the possession of such an enormous area of the earth's surface. The wars of the 18th century and the discovery of Captain Cook gave England a greater territory to develop than had ever come to any country. No wonder there was a feverish demand for slaves, which reached its peak about 1790. Slaves to develop this gigantic colonial Empire — but there were not slaves enough — as in Graeco-Roman and Egyptian days.

The value of the common man was on the rise — Democratic ideas were spreading from England to France and to the whole world — so that slavery was giving place to the equality of man. Hence 18th century England was not only unable to supply the enormous number of slaves that this new Empire would need, but the people themselves were against slavery. The folly of forcing people into obedience was made apparent by the war of American Independence.

Moreover, unlike Rome and Greece, Egypt and Spain, England was peopled with thrifty puritans who amassed wealth, not just for Oriental indulgence in luxury but for the purpose of creating more wealth. The puritan not only worked hard but believed in his money workikng too. This was completely foreign to the Oriental and Mediterranean people. Thus Industrial capitalism would have been impossible without British Puritanism.

Another important factor was the fact that British democracy was fostered by absentee Hanoverian Monarchs who left the government in the hands of Parliament. Thus the British were relatively free from interference from within their walls as they were relatively free from invasion from without. Thus they were allowed to develop their ingenuity and originality with less than the usual interference from the stupid-powerful. Hence we may conclude that seven important prerequisites had to coincide in time and place before we could develop machinery.

- I The challenge of an enormous new empire to develop.
- II The absence and decline of slavery.
- III The presence of a democratic, relatively equalitarian and adventurous sea faring people.
- IV A puritan philosophy that emphasized self-restraint and self-denial rather than self-indulgence.
- V Freedom from foreign and tyrannical interference.
- VI The presence of a larger number of wealthy men with increasing incomes available for investment.
- VII The contemporaneous development of Modern Science.

Democracy, Science and the Industrial Revolution thus were the triplets born in the 18th century, that wrought their Industrial Revolution and made it possible for 18th century England alone to develop it and to increase its population eight fold. To give some idea of how quickly the machine came into its own, let us reflect that James Watt and Boulton between 1775 and 1800 had manufactured 289 steam engines

for mills, mines, locomotives and factories. At the same time Hargreaves invented the spinning jenny which enabled 100 spindles to be worked by a single wheel whereas the old spinning wheel operated only one spindle.

In 1813 there were 2400 power looms in England; in 1820 — 14,150; in 1829 — 55,000; and in 1833 — 100,000. Since 1770, machines have been produced with increasing acceleration, so that hardly is one machine produced in quantity before it is out of date. Prior to 1875 there were only 400,000 inventions listed in the United States Patent Office but by 1941 these patents were coming in at 43,000 a year.

Of all those thousands of inventions eight may be said to have influenced our civilization most powerfully:

1. The steam engine — resulting in railroads and steamboats.
2. Electricity with Hydroelectric power and the Dynamo.
3. Telephone and Telegraphs.
4. Automobiles.
5. Motion Pictures.
6. Radio and Television.
7. Airplane.
8. Chemical Fibres.

The effects of those eight inventions alone would take a volume to enumerate. By 1833 the effects of the steam engine were being appreciated by Heinrich Heine who wrote in *Florentine Nights* the following lines:

“The perfection of machinery which is applied to everything and has superseded so many human functions is to me something dismal. This artificial life of wheels, shafts, cylinders and a thousand little tools, pins and teeth which move almost passionately fill me with horror. I am distressed no less by the precision, the punctuality, the strictness in the life of the people — for just as the machines seem to have the perfection of men, so the men seem like machines.

“Yes, wood and iron and brass seem to have usurped human intelligence and to have gone almost mad from very

fullness of mind, while mindless man like a hollow ghost exercises his ordinary duties in a machine like fashion."

R. A. Freeman in his book *Social Decay and Regeneration* writes: "This mechanism by its reactions on man and his environment has been and is still antagonistic to human welfare. It has destroyed industry and replaced it by mere labor; it has degraded and vulgarized the works of man; it has destroyed social unity and replaced it by social disintegration, and class antagonism to an extent that threatens civilization; it has injuriously affected the structural type of society by developing its organization at the expense of the individual; it has endowed the inferior man with political power which he employs to the common disadvantage by creating political institutions of a socially destructive type, and finally by its reactions on the activities of war, it constitutes an agent for the wholesale destruction of man and his works and the extinction of human culture."

Now all this is true enough just as the great blessings of technology are also true. It is like an automatic pistol, is it good or bad? Does it not depend on whether it is in the hands of a madman, a criminal or a policeman? How many medical discoveries have been abused before their use becomes intelligent and objective? It is hard to realize that iron plows were opposed by American farmers at the close of the 18th century. The paddle wheel boat which Denis Papin devised in 1707 was destroyed by the boatmen at Münden, who saw unemployment in the offing. The word "sabotage" itself comes from the wooden sabot the French workmen in their hostility to the machine hurled into the gears. The cotton gin in the south was fought by the labourers who feared they would be displaced. Even the introduction of Rural Free Delivery was expected to ruin business by displacing it to mail orders. Even Pasteur's anti-toxins were bitterly opposed, as were subsequently the discoveries of Freud.

Many of these dire predictions which almost invariably greet new discoveries have never been fulfilled. Never has

there been so much available work as in America today—but unemployment through replacement by the machine was one of the first serious consequences, as any study of England 120 years ago would show. Yet England has grown from a country of 8 million to one of 50 million, and the United States from 2 million to 160 million.

One of the most important consequences of the Machine Age has been the greater food supply made available by improvements in the growing, cultivating and distribution of foods. According to Bassett Jones where earlier cultures devoted 80-90% of their total energy to the production of food, America devotes only 10%. At the turn of the century 38% of our population was agricultural. Now 50 years later only 12% is enough to feed us, and that more plentifully than 50 years ago. The effect of improved nutrition is showing itself in the increasing stature of our people, generation by generation. Yet the decline in rural population has resulted in more urban culture, making our population more vulnerable to attack, more congested, and more dependent on the efficient working of Public Utilities.

The effect of the Industrial Revolution was the production of wealth — the rise of capitalism — and ultimately the wider and wider distribution of the products of manufacture.

Thus the common man has come to have an increasing power to determine what sort of life we are due to lead. You cannot make profits unless you appeal to the common man's tastes and intelligence. The common man who sought to destroy the machine has flourished and multiplied because of the machine. His increased facility of communication by Radio-Telephone-Television has therefore not resulted in any greater profundity of thought. As Stuart Chase remarks, the telephone has merely extended the area of gossip. When the telegraph was established between Maine and Texas, Thoreau doubted if Maine had anything to say to Texas. Thus commonness does not mean quality. Indeed the effect of machinery has been to level everything we hear and do to the same

common level. We are both closer together, in our capacity to quickly reach one another, but farther apart in the mechanical nature of our relationships. The dictaphone and the new printing devices have made the publication of books easier than ever — but what great work of literature can you remember reading in the past ten years? Can any modern telephone conversation equal the correspondence of 18th century writers? Yet we are destroying our forests to produce cheap literature and Mississippi floods.

There can be no doubt that our standards of living are higher than ever before. The common man today lives in greater luxury and health than a lord and king in medieval times. But when has luxury enriched the human mind? What we have gained physically we have lost mentally. There is less Smallpox, Typhoid, Tuberculosis and Diphtheria, but more neuroses and psychoses. There is greater specialization but greater dependence and vulnerability. A medieval village could support itself through its own crafts and skills, whereas a modern American village would become extinct without electric power, the automobile and the chain grocery store. What we gain in one direction, we lose in another.

The machine age is destroying class distinctions. Even the caste system of India is disappearing. In my apartment I was rubbing elbows with an Arch Duke of the Hapsburgs. The aristocrat is being replaced by the Public Relations boys who make up in speed for shallowness of mind and lack of discrimination. Cheapness is the word for the machine age. Who makes the loudest noise, who advertises himself most, must be best. So we have an endless deluge of soon forgotten best sellers — and no Goethe — no Shakespeare — no Balzac.

The advocates of the machine age enthusiastically hail the decline of superstition — but are we not developing new cults, new myths, even before our very eyes? Astrology — spiritualism and other animistic faiths are spreading as the old religious faiths are declining. If man has obtained more power, is his ego more confident? The average American

with his refrigerator, trailer, car, washing machine, and electrical or gasoline saws can give himself increasing leisure — so that he has more time to listen to silly commercials and literary trash on television. Power to do what? No machine has as yet developed the power of making a man think. There is nothing the common man hates more than to think. For there is nothing more powerful, more active, less passive than thought, — and as we have seen the identification with the machine produces passivity, and the devotion to means not ends. If man's ego were really strengthened by machine power our state hospitals would be decreasing instead of multiplying, and we would be needing fewer psychiatrists, rather than more. The machine instead of simplifying life is making it more complicated.

One of the most damaging effects of the machine age is seen in the modern woman and the family. At first the home ceased to be the center of a man's craft; then it became less and less the center of his moral and intellectual security. The day when sons worked side by side with their fathers and became master craftsmen has been replaced by the day of the absent father as a wage earner with mother supreme in the home. Feminine identification in the males is either accepted with passive dependence or fought off with compensatory aggressiveness. Meanwhile, the girl who patterns herself on the dominating female role of her mother finds this of little value to her in industry where she must compete with men or depend on them for her economic security. Woman is no longer mistress of indispensable arts and crafts that could make the home self sufficient, but she is rendered helpless and useless with labor saving machinery, and does not know how to spend her leisure. Wearing overalls, and using her tools like the men, it is little wonder that sexual differentiations are disappearing. She is just another member of local Union No. 1101 and just a little man in an age of mighty gadgets. The enthusiasts for the Machine Age dwell on the greater speed of living that we experience, the feeling of constant movement. But move-

ment for what, or towards what? It is true we are being crowded with more experience and distracted by more demands than we have time to reflect upon. Experience without thought is meaningless — and the machine, like compulsion to amass wealth that came with it, is meaningless. It withdraws us from ends to fascination with means. A group of people are capable of coming together in the evening from widely distant corners of a state and then dispersing, or even of communication by telephone or radio with persons on the other side of the globe — but what is easily accomplished has diminished value. The best literature in the world has been written by candle light, not by modern electricity, or noiseless typewriter. The more we are equipped with the splendid machinery for creative work the less we produce of significance. The mountains of Hollywood produce Hollywood mice.

The deadline is an expression of modern creativity for commercial purposes. Artists and writers are pushing ideas out of themselves without any feeling of pride in their own handiwork. The prince or nobleman who patronized and supported the arts in past centuries was a Rock of Gibraltar to the creative artist in comparison with the fickle public and even fickle advertisers and contact men. In place of a discriminating and cultured nobleman, the modern producer or patron is merely one who has "made his pile" out of oil — and depends on hearsay.

We save money by cheapening the quality of goods and waste it by advertising it falsely as good. So we are paying more and more for less and less. Advertising is thus creating a fake and phony world in which it is not what you know but whom you know that counts. Amidst the babel of advertisement, who can discriminate?

There is one word that sums up the meaning and achievement of the machine age — and that is cheapness. The machine has made everything cheaper from newspapers and education to political ethics and travel. The Hoe printing press can turn out five miles of papers at a speed greater

than a man can walk, and whole forests are being destroyed for the trash that is being printed on it — cheap quality of goods made deliberately obsolescent. Profit before quality — what does the man in the street want? What he has always wanted — cheapness. What is cheapness? The word comes from the Anglo-Saxon word "Ceap" meaning bargain sale or price — hence the market place called Cheapside. One of the meanings of cheapness is costing little trouble or effort to obtain. Is this not the essence of what the machine has done for us? Cheapness comes from quantity, not quality; and the machine by giving us quantity has brought it. Cheap has also the meaning of worthless, and tawdry — like the Greek word *ἐντελής* or the Latin *Vilis* which means common, cheap, and vile. Can it then be the fate of the machine to make life worthless and cheap?

Commonness, cheapness, vulgarity and ugliness are all the results of the Law of Diminishing Returns. One dish of ice cream gives so much pleasure but ten dishes do not give ten times more pleasure. One person in a bath has so much contentment but four people in the bath do not multiply the contentment but reduce it. So we are faced with the ironic conclusion that making things easier and more available by machine manufacture has reduced the pleasure to be obtained from it. This does not operate apparently until a saturation point is approached. One of the inevitable results of machinery then seems to be universal collectivism and uniformity of possessions and distribution.

Since machinery gives more and more power to the average man, it will depend upon how sagacious and foresighted the average man is, as to whether the machine age will bring man to glory or destruction. How wise and foresighted is the average man? Does he conserve his natural resources or does he waste them tragically without thought of the future? Does he develop his powers by discipline and self-denial or does he enjoy the pleasures of the moment? History tells us only too clearly what the average man wants

is immediate pleasure and no worry about the future. Hence power in the hands of average intelligence spells catastrophe, because it requires more than average intelligence to avert catastrophe.

On the other hand, the antithesis of the machine is thought. No machine can think or inspire thought. It cannot originate; it can only execute the desires of the man. In that it resembles the average man who wants nothing less than to think. He is too passive, too inert for that. Thinking is the least passive of all human actions because it revolutionizes action or makes it unnecessary. Thinking is action that selects the best action. Even computing machines cannot correct their own errors though they may reduce our ability to calculate.

So we are faced by the strange discovery that the facility of communication provided by the machine reduces the need or desire to think, just as quantity manufacturers reduced the quality and pleasure derived from the product. What is easily done or produced gives less permanent pleasure than that which is the result of long effort and training. Hence the decline in craftsmanship with improved machinery, the decline in scholarship with lowering of educational standards, the decline in social security with the cheapening of moral standards. What then has saved us from perdition? Simply that the average man has not yet obtained control of this machinery. It is still for the most part in the hands of the more intelligent and the more responsible. Manufacturing has not yet gone so far as to provide every man with an airplane or the brains to operate one. The law of diminishing returns has operated only in certain special places and times such as in a Wall Street boom and crash, or Coney Island on a hot summer day.

Just as thinking, initiative and hard patient work went into the discovery of the machine, so the same may enable us to survive the cheapening effect, which is leading us to disaster. Despite the emphasis on quantity that the machine has brought, life has become more complicated rather

than less; hence no machine can cope with the complications that machinery has produced, and so we must fall back on intelligence after all. Like the sorcerer's apprentice, the average man cannot cope with the confusion which average thinking produces and he requires periodical salvation by the man of character and wisdom from his identification with the machine.

Thus the machine which was invented to replace slavery and make man free to enjoy leisure creatively, has merely returned him to slavery. Man sought to escape from his own automatism and failed. It is in his own tendency to automatism that the problem lies, for the machine as we have seen is just the projection of this automatism. The French peasants who threw their sabots into the machinery were throwing them at themselves, that very automatism in themselves that enabled Napoleon to kill them by the thousands in battle.

It is not accidental that our last machine, Atomic Fission, should be devoted to war and destruction, any more than gunpowder in the 15th century. Nothing like war stimulates man to invent machinery — so we may ask is not war itself the most striking instance in his history of man's automatism? Are not the thousands of Chinese peasants slaughtered by our high explosives in Korea but little more than machines? The military mind loves to think of men not as thinking, creative personalities but as machines. Thus man the automaton is man the warrior — the man with the machine in his hands — killing other men with machines mechanically, without thinking of consequences. Attila, Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, Hitler, were they not mere slaughtering machines? Did they not, like modern machinery, make life cheap? Wherever they went they left passivity, apathy, submission — and inertia — all the qualities of slavery — all the qualities of common man.

The Confessions of William Shakespeare

by

A. Bronson Feldman, Ph. D.

1

"Shakespeare," says Hanns Sachs in the reminiscences of his many years of collaboration with the founder of psychoanalysis (*Freud: Master and Friend*, 1945, p. 108), "was the most frequent topic of our discussions when they turned to literature. Freud's remarks about the Oedipus complex in *Hamlet* had fallen on fertile ground. . . Somewhat later Freud turned his attention to other plays: to *Richard III* and *Macbeth* in 'Some Character-types Encountered in Psychoanalysis,' and to *The Merchant of Venice* in 'The Motive of the Choice of the Caskets.' Several of his disciples, myself among them, followed his example and found rich analytic pasture in Shakespeare's plays. In our discussions he made me notice how Shakespeare, although a master in displaying or concealing his technique of motivation at will, is not, like Ibsen, mechanically conscientious about it. He throws logic and consequence to the winds and courts contradictions if they suit the emotional situation. . . Freud later gave credence to the story that the author of Shakespeare's work was a scion of the old and noble line of De Vere. He lent me the book which presented and defended this new hypothesis ('*Shakespeare Identified in Edward de Vere, the Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*, by J. Thomas Looney), but I remained unconvinced. To me the small-town boy, whose

father was fined for the dungheap at the door, seems still the most likely author of *The Tempest* and *Measure for Measure*."

The last remark of Sachs appears to be a sort of retort to Freud's remark in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930, p. 55): "We do not think highly of the cultural level of an English country town in the time of Shakespeare when we read that there was a tall dungheap in front of his father's house in Stratford."

In the numerous commentaries and notes on Shakespeare written by psychoanalysts this passage from Sachs is the only one that mentions the conviction of Freud on the question of Shakespeare authorship. A curious silence prevails on the matter in the literature which professes to interpret drama and poetic genius in the light of Freud's discoveries and doctrines. Sometimes the silence takes on the air of an almost morbid resistance. For example, in the first English printing of his *Autobiographical Study* (New York, 1927, p. 130) we find the declaration: "I no longer believe that William Shakespeare the actor from Stratford was the author of the works that have been ascribed to him. Since reading *Shakespeare Identified*, by J. T. Looney, I am almost convinced that the assumed name conceals the personality of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford." In the second English version of *An Autobiographical Study* (London, 1935) we are surprised to find that this avowal has been suppressed. It was made in earnest to correct a wrong impression that Freud had given the readers of *The Interpretation of Dreams* and the original edition of his self-chronicle (1925). When he issued these two works he had trusted the judgment of Georg Brandes that Hamlet was composed soon after the death of the dramatist's father—in 1601. On discovering that there was no reliable proof for Brandes's assertion Freud added the note to his autobiography warning his disciples and students that he had lost confidence in the traditional accounts of the dramatist's life. Now something happened between the two translations of 1927 and 1935 to induce him to with-

draw this challenge to the upholders of the Stratford-on-Avon cult. In its place, as a footnote on the erroneous statement of the text concerning the occasion of the writing of *Hamlet*, now stood the innocuous words: "I have particular reasons for no longer wishing to lay any emphasis upon this point."

Why the particular reasons could be indicated in the American version of 1927 and had to be banished from the British version, we may surmise from the fact that the editor of the latter, Ernest Jones, failed to make any allusion to Freud's new hypothesis on the poet's personality in the different editions of his own essay on *Hamlet*. Jones persisted in repeating the guesswork of orthodoxy on the provenance of the play, guesswork which is dear—and profitable—to the British shrine at Stratford. To the sponsors of that shrine (lucidly etched by Henry James in his story *The Birthplace*) a tribute to the analytic talent of J. Thomas Looney would ring as heresy and sacrilege. Coming from Freud, it might provoke them to retaliation anger against the disciples of psychoanalysis within their economic reach, doubtless to the detriment of British psychiatry. It was to be expected that the prudence of Ernest Jones, the dean of English analysts, would act to cut out the offensive declaration in favor of Edward de Vere. The Earl of Oxford is not simply a "claimant" to the crown of Shakespeare, you understand. He was a poet and playwright who enjoyed hurting the feelings of high and mighty respectable Britons, and his reputation in his native country is prodigiously bad. To have presented the founder of psychoanalysis as a champion of the Oxford claim to Shakespeare's honors meant risking the smirch of bohemia on the medical psychologists who had toiled so hard to "naturalize" the Freudian theories in Britain. It meant perhaps a resurgence of the kind of obloquy that medicine men flung on Dr. John Elliotson when he introduced hypnotism to English hospitals.

After Freud's death his *Outline of Psychoanalysis* came out in German (1940) with a footnote renewing his offensive

against the Stratford cult. As translated by James Strachey in 1949 this footnote runs: "The name 'William Shakespeare' is most probably a pseudonym behind which there lies concealed a great unknown. Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, a man who has been regarded as the author of Shakespeare's works, lost a beloved and admired father while he was still a boy, and completely repudiated his mother, who contracted a new marriage soon after her husband's death" (p. 96). This pronouncement was greeted by the disciples of Freud with a silence that would have been deadly if it had not been so ridiculous. It is indeed edifying to observe the most voluble followers of the great critic of human nature presenting a spectacle of what he called "the aversion to learning anything new so characteristic of the scientist." (Cf. *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*, in the Modern Library edition, p. 186.) They continued to pay homage to the Shylock of Stratford.

It is certainly true, as Henry James affirmed (in *The Birthplace*), that the real William Shakespeare covered his tracks as no other human being has ever done. At the same time he was bound to suffer the doom of all humanity and betray himself, unconsciously, in every gesture and word. None of the titanic masks under which he strove so artfully to hide himself (*Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, *Lear*, etc.) proves invulnerable to the analytic art of Freud. Psychoanalysis promises one fine day to make the dramatist as familiar to us as any poor mortal may be. When that day arrives we will stand wonderstruck before the fact that nearly four hundred years were necessary to solve the mystery of the world's biggest "jig-maker".

Since the publication of *Shakespeare Identified* in 1920 the disciples of Looney have assembled a mass of testimony in support of his theory which is sufficient to explain every major problem of the Shakespeare poems and dramas. The facts and arguments marshalled in *The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford* by B. M. Ward (1928), *Hidden Allusions in Shakespeare's Plays* by Eva Turner Clark (1931), *The Life Story*

of *Edward de Vere as "William Shakespeare"* by Percy Allen (1932), and *Personal Clues in Shakespeare Poems and Sonnets* by Gerald H. Rendall (1934)—to name only four important books in defense of the new hypothesis—have gone unanswered by the official oracles of the Stratford fidelity, except where they have seen fit to have some fun with mistakes of the Oxfordians. It is an ancient habit of the oracles to strain at gnats and swallow camels, as Mark Twain long ago pointed out. (Cf. *Is Shakespeare Dead?*) I myself have undergone the muteness treatment after publishing evidence that Edward de Vere was the Lord Chamberlain who directed the company of actors for whom William Shakespeare worked. To the historical proof that the name "Shakespeare" (often spelled in his time with a hyphen) is a pen name, a *nom de guerre*, I now propose to add the proof of psychoanalysis, along the lines suggested by Freud.

I intend to restrict myself to the examination of the writings of Shakespeare which are formally, on the surface, autobiographical. By limiting ourselves only to the work in which he speaks in his own person we can hope to avoid the accusation that we are projecting or reading into his lines whatever we wish. We shall deal with the man himself so far as his ego dared to show its nature in candor. Consequently we shall not touch on any of his plays, nor the two long narratives about Venus and Lucrece. The boundaries of our research are set by the signature of William Shakespeare in the dedications of these tales, and the first person singular of his Sonnets. In the interpretation of these I shall assume that the author means exactly what he says, unless there is formidable, factual evidence to the contrary. This assumption is demanded by the principle of economy in science, which prohibits the multiplication of hypotheses. Shakespeare stated the principle long before scientists became conscious of it: "More matter, with less art" (*Hamlet*, II, ii).

Shakespeare's fidelity to his art, poetry, was religious, obsessional. To his way of thinking it marked his election

as one of "God's spies," born to hold mirrors up to nature in order to reveal her darkest secrets. At work on his priest-like task he felt remote and superior to the rest of the race, and disdained its popular interests. ("Lord, what fools these mortals be!") When the first of his works to carry his name, *Venus and Adonis*, came from the press it flaunted as a motto an arrogant couplet from Ovid—his favorite poet—verses that may be translated this way:

Let the vulgar admire the vile; for me, may tawny Apollo
Minister brimful cups from the Muses fountain, Castalia.
In the spirit of aristocracy burning from these words he chose Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, as the man most worthy of the dedication of his poem. The Earl was turning twenty, and already famous for his love of Italianate literature as well as his personal beauty. Perhaps Shakespeare designed the *Venus and Adonis* to gratify the sensual imagination of the young nobleman and to warn him against the dangers of extreme self-love (narcissism). Philip Stringer's adulation of the young Earl, in Latin verse written in 1592, made the warning necessary. Delicately Shakespeare reminded Southampton of his social duty, expressing the wish that the content of the youth's heart might always answer his wish "and the world's hopeful expectation." We have not the smallest testimony concerning the effect of the poem or its dedication on the Earl at whom it was aimed.

There is absolutely no evidence that William Shakespeare of Stratford-on-Avon was acquainted with Henry Wriothesley. The sole link between them is the bare name at the close of the dedication to *Venus and Adonis*.

The dedication opens and concludes with an air of affected humility, the pride of a poet showing off a brain-child to a world hard to convince of the merits of poetry. If Southampton seemed pleased with the trifle now presented to him—a toy of nearly twelve hundred verses—Shakespeare vowed he would "take advantage of all idle hours," till he had honored the young Earl with "some graver labour."

"But if the first heir of my invention prove de-

formed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather, and never after ear so barren a land, for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest."

These few words have probably provoked more commentary than all the rest of the book. Many scholars have taken them as an avowal that the *Venus* was the first product of Shakespeare's pen, even a product of his adolescence in Stratford. Nothing had come from his hand in book-form prior to the publication of this poem (registered with the London Stationers on April 18, 1593). It appeared reasonable to suppose that "the first heir of my invention" meant this was his first book. The explanation left many students dissatisfied and uneasy. They could not imagine Shakespeare treating so contemptuously such plays as *The Comedy of Errors*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Henry VI*, *Titus Andronicus*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, all of which are dated with expert confidence before April 1593. They preferred to hunt for another explanation of the mystifying phrase. So far their scourings for a better interpretation have been in vain. They would have us believe that the poet was cunning past man's thought.

There is general agreement that the passage was intended to be witty, and a few researchers acquainted with the dramatist's methods have seen in it a ripe example of his most chronic wit-work, paronomasia. Suppose we view the phrase in question as a pun. We are then confronted with a joke about sex in rather queer taste. The "first heir" emerges with the double meaning of (a) the earliest brain-child of the poet's "invention," and (b) the earliest heir or male child to spring from his virility (invention being Latin for coming-in, i.e. sexual intercourse). If this interpretation is true we should expect to find that the poet had dedicated his son and heir to the Earl of Southampton—"so noble a godfather." We are not surprised therefore to find the defenders of Stratford tradition resisting the suggestion of a pun in the foreword to *Venus and Adonis*. The sole boy born to their idol was the twin Hamnet, baptised in Febru-

ary 1585, who was buried in Stratford in August 1596. He could not be the first heir of the poet's ingenuity. Moreover, the reference to Southampton as a godfather implies that Shakespeare's son was actually named after Henry Wriothesley. The friends of the Looney theory are gratified to announce that the sole heir of the Earl of Oxford was in truth named Henry. And he was born on February 24, 1593, and christened on March 31, a little more than a fortnight before the entry of *Venus and Adonis* in the ledger of the Stationers Company. His baptism took place in the church of Stoke Newington, within walking distance of the Theatre and the Curtain, two playhouses of fame in the life of Shakespeare. In June the Lord Chamberlain's men performed on a stage in Stoke Newington, acting *Hamlet* and *The Taming of a Shrew*. This was the company to which William Shakespeare belonged for most of his theatrical life. The Lord Chamberlain, as I have attempted to prove in detail elsewhere ("Shakespeare's Jester—Oxford's Servant," Shakespeare Fellowship Quarterly, Autumn 1947), was very likely Edward de Vere himself, the Lord Great Chamberlain of England. The April in which *Venus and Adonis* went to press must have been a merry month for the Earl of Oxford. Not only could he rejoice in the son his second wife had given him—solace for his conceit of masculinity, the mettle daunted three times by his first wife, who left him at death with three remarkable daughters. The Earl could also rejoice in the friendship and affection of the handsome Southampton, who had been engaged to marry his eldest daughter, the strong-tempered Lady Elizabeth. The engagement was arranged by Oxford's father-in-law, Lord Burghley, whose ambition for his grandchildren craved their union with the bluest and wealthiest blood in the kingdom. Southampton apparently did not enter the contract with Lady Vere wholeheartedly, and according to the Jesuit Father Henry Garnett succeeded in breaking their engagement in 1594 to the astonishing tune of 5000 pounds. The rupture did not spoil the relations of Oxford and Southampton. The latter re-

mained to his death a staunch and intimate friend of Oxford's heir. Unfortunately we are still in the dark as to the nature of the bonds between the father and Henry Wriothesley. But the curious fact that Oxford's heir was the first Vere in twenty generations to be named Henry furnishes food for thought on the matter.

Edward de Vere had some reasons to fear that his son might prove deformed. His own body, while celebrated for its athletic graces in youth, had always been pathetically short. In 1581, when he was thirty years old, Oxford had been reviled by Lord Henry Howard for certain "botches and deformities of his misshapen life." In the spring of 1582 he fought a duel with Sir Thomas Knyvet on account of a girl of the Queen's Chamber, Anne Vavasor. The duel ended with Oxford wounded dangerously, "to the peril of his life," Lord Burghley said. The scar of this event may have impressed the Earl with the idea that he was doomed to be deformed. It is noteworthy that in the spring of 1583 a son was born to him who died shortly after his birth. The psychic wound inflicted by this event would inevitably excite his castration complex, which would induce retaliation on the mother. We know how miserable he made his Countess Anne. The birth of his second boy surely revived the memory of the loss of his first, and waking the old grief would stir up unconscious cruel thoughts of his new wife. He stood ready to blame her for the possible deformity of his heir, and secretly vowed, in the abysmal gloom of his ego, if the child turned out crooked, never again to "ear so barren a land." It is a fact that the Earl and his Countess Elizabeth lived together for eleven years after the birth of Henry and had no more children.

On May 9, 1594, *The Rape of Lucrece* was registered for publication, and for the second time the name of William Shakespeare was blazoned in print, and, as in the *Venus and Adonis*, not on the title-page but at the end of the dedication. For the second and last time Shakespeare dedicated a book of his, once again to the Earl of Southampton. This time

his dedication, while sustaining the pretense of "untutored" poetry, sounded notes of sincerity that make the wit and charm of the foreword to the *Venus* seem mere trickery. The foreword to the *Lucrece* rings with an avowal of infinite love:

What I have done is yours; what I have to do is yours; being part in all I have, devoted yours.

The passion of these words has long been recognized as homoerotic, a breath of the libido of Plato's Greece and the Italy of Leonardo da Vinci, Aretino, and Bazzi alias Sodoma. But the avowal has not been taken seriously by most inquirers in the life of Shakespeare. They have not looked at the works of Shakespeare produced after May 1594 in the light of his declaration that they would all be "devoted" to Southampton, from a love "without end."

We catch several glimpses of this love in action in a contemporary satire entitled *Willobie his Avis* (1594). From this pamphlet we learn that Henry Willobie (also called H. W.) was a London youth fond of Italian and Spanish fashions, who fell hotly in love with a lady named Avis, and pining in secret grief for her confessed his desire to "his familiar friend W. S., who not long before had tried the courtesy of the like passion, and was now newly recovered of the like infection." Scholars have long been convinced that these initials stand for Henry Wriothsley and William Shakespeare. The theatrical imagery used in describing their relations clearly identifies W. S. We know of no H. W. in Shakespeare's life who could be termed, in 1594, his familiar friend, except the Earl of Southampton. True, the companionship of the two men is depicted in the poem as far closer and warmer than one would expect between the jack of all trades from Stratford and the aristocrat. But there is no sound reason for identifying W. S. with the man from Stratford. The satire plainly alludes to W. S. as "the old player." Objective testimony informs us that the career of Shakespeare of Stratford as a player had barely begun when *Willobie* was composed. He was just thirty years old at

the time, hardly an age for a vigorous businessman to be branded an old gamester. And he would never have dared to address the Earl of Southampton as "friend Harry," like W. S. does so cheerfully. The Earl of Oxford, on the other hand, fits the part of the old player perfectly. He was forty-four years old when *Willobie* came out, and there was no gentleman in England so deeply learned in the ways of the stage. In his youth he had been something of an actor himself. A mass of respectable evidence has been gathered to prove that he was the target of the satire (Pauline K. Angell, in the Publications of the Modern Language Association, 1937). Whoever wrote *Willobie his Avis* possessed the secret of the Earl of Oxford's dramatic career, and incidentally could parody with amazing cleverness the Earl's own erotic poetry.

In August 1593 John Danter, the printer of *Romeo and Juliet*, issued posthumous sonnets by Thomas Watson in a book named *The Tears of Fancy*. The final poem happens to be a sonnet which is also attributed (in the contemporary Rawlinson Manuscripts) to Edward de Vere. Today it is impossible to prove the true authorship. For our purposes it does not matter; it is enough to know that the name of Oxford could be connected, around the year 1593, with a sonnet of love. This was the time when Shakespeare's love sonnets were circulating among his private friends, sonnets that were above all devoted to his "friend Harry," the Earl of Southampton.

Before proceeding with our analysis of the Sonnets, I would like to point out that the man behind the mask of William Shakespeare was known to at least one other clever poet beside the author of *Willobie his Avis*. In January 1593 the English Rabelais, Thomas Nash, published his *Strange News of the Intercepting Certain Letters*, with a deliberately bewildering comic dedication, "To the most copious Carminist (meaning song-maker—F.) of our time, and famous persecutor of Priscian (i.e. breaker of grammar rules—F.), his very friend Master Apis Lapis," also hailed

as "Gentle Master William." Authorities in Tudor literature have utterly failed to elicit the identity of this William, and none ever made an effort to elucidate the cryptic dedication. That William was a nickname of Edward de Vere, has in my opinion been conclusively proved by Charles Wisner Barrell in his study of Nash's remarks (in the *Shakespeare Fellowship Quarterly*, October 1944). Independently of Barrell, in England, Gerald Phillips suggested that the Earl of Oxford was the object of Nash's humor. In *Shakespeare Identified* Looney had already presented a strong argument for thinking that the poet Edmund Spenser held Oxford in mind when he lamented (in *The Tears of the Muses*, 1591) the departure from the comic stage of a dramatist whom he called "Our pleasant Willy." The Earl seems to have assumed the name in disguising himself as a poet in the pastoral vein. We know that he wrote copious poetry. The Cambridge University writer Gabriel Harvey, in 1578, applauded him for great excellence in letters: "I have seen many Latin verses of thine," Harvey said: "Yes, even more English verses are extant." Unfortunately erudition has so far exhumed scarcely more than twenty of his poems, mostly juvenile things. We are even unluckier with regard to the dramatic writings of Oxford. Elizabethan learning extolled him as an author of interludes and comedies, but none of his plays survives, at least not under his own name. It is worthy of mention that Gabriel Harvey, in the work of 1578 already quoted, had praised Oxford for his prowess in tournaments and asserted that his countenance seemed to shake a spear! As Viscount Bulbeck he carried a crest with a lion shaking a broken spear. This picture, Harvey's rhapsodic metaphor, and perhaps an irresistible impulse to *double entendre*, seeing in the spear a symbol of sex-war, could easily have prompted De Vere to adopt the pen-name of William Shakespeare for his dramas of war and love. I conjecture that he adopted the name on encountering the runaway from Stratford at the theatre where the latter earned a living as caretaker of horses. Oxford, I have no doubt, was

responsible for poor William Shakespeare's admission to actors' circles, and employed him probably as the agent for bringing forward his own plays. It is possible that the two had met before, during one of the Earl's visits to his estate at Bilton on the Avon, a short distance from Stratford. The discovery of a sharpwitted and businesslike fellow actually named William Shakespeare must have struck the Earl of Oxford as a gift of the gods, for he needed somebody to represent his interests in the theatre directly, to avoid the vulgar scandal and commercial taint that were sure to afflict any nobleman who took an open part in the vagabonds' game of the stage. To the extent that he was able to tell the story, in verse, he told it in the Sonnets of Shakespeare.

Shake-speares Sonnets: that is what they were called when they first came from the press in 1609, five years after the Earl of Oxford's death. The publisher was one Thomas Thorpe, a man of low reputation in the book trade. Thorpe took the liberty of dedicating *Shake-speares Sonnets* to a friend named Mr. W. H., "the only begetter of these ensuing Sonnets." Disciples of Looney have demonstrated that Mr. W. H. was none other than William Hall, who doubtless obtained the poems by stealth. In 1606 Hall acted as "begetter" of a theological booklet entitled "A Fourfold Meditation," which is now understood to be the work of Philip Howard, the Roman Catholic Earl of Arundel, who had died in 1595, a martyr prisoner in the Tower of London. The *Meditation* came from the press of George Eld, the same man who printed *Shake-speares Sonnets*. The former also bore the initials W. H., and the only "begetter" admitted that they were "conveyed by a mere accident" to his hands. It is conceivable that the accident was connected with the felony that Rose Jones was suspected of committing against Oxford's widow in 1606. She and her husband would have been deeply interested in a book by the Earl of Arundel, who had known Oxford intimately in the years when the latter was a convert to the Catholic faith. The two Earls were related by blood: Arundel's father was the son of an aunt

of Edward de Vere. When we learn that William Hall belonged to the parish of Hackney, where De Vere and his widow lived, our suspicion of the source of Hall's lucky accident turns nearly to conviction.

The *Meditation* was dedicated by the publisher to one Mathew Saunders, to whom "W. H. wisheth, with long life, a prosperous achievement of his good desires." The words remind us acutely of Thomas Thorpe's dedication of the Sonnets to W. H. "To the only begetter of these ensuing Sonnets," Thorpe wrote, in lurid capital letters. "Mr. W. H. all happiness, and that eternity promised by our ever-living Poet, wisheth the well-wishing adventurer in setting forth." The adventurer is Thorpe of course, hopefully setting forth a volume which he anticipated would net him a delectable profit. In the "all" that follows the initial H we can detect a typical Elizabethan pun. The reason for the special wishes of felicity and immortality was uncovered by Colonel B. R. Ward in *The Mystery of Mr. W. H.* (1923), a triumph of Oxfordian research. Ward found in the parish register of Hackney a record of the marriage of William Hall, on August 4, 1608, nine months before the appearance of the Sonnets. Very likely they were set forth on the occasion of the birth of this "only begetter"'s first child. He would have cordially appreciated the application to himself of the theme of "Our ever-living Poet" in the first nineteen Sonnets, the promise of eternity through wedlock and offspring. The expression "ever-living" is unquestionably a euphemism for *defunct*. Shakespeare used it in *Henry VI* (Part I, IV, iii) in reference to the dead King Henry the Fifth, "That ever-living man of memory." Hall and Thorpe must have been aware that the poet was dead. The "accident" that conveyed his private poems into Hall's hands probably occurred while the Countess Elizabeth de Vere was sadly occupied with departure from King's Place, the house in Hackney where her playwright husband spent his last years and died. She sold King's Place in 1609.

We may take the word of Shakespeare that the Sonnets,

being part in all he had devoted to the Earl of Southampton, were mainly designed for the pleasure of the youth who was engaged to marry the Earl of Oxford's eldest daughter. Southampton was reluctant to enter the bonds of matrimony, and Shakespeare lectured him on their necessity and redeeming features in *Venus and Adonis*:

Torches are made to light, jewels to wear,
Dainties to taste, fresh beauty for the use,
Herbs for their smell, and sappy plants to bear;
Things growing to themselves are growth's abuse:
Seeds spring from seeds, and beauty breedeth
beauty;

Thou wast begot; to get it is thy duty.

The opening of the Sonnet-sequence executes tuneful variations on this teleological theme, together with promises of immortality and the gratification of egoism through the reproduction of the beloved self. The narcissic megalomania of parents was never stated before or after with such voluble candor. The beautiful young man to whom these poems are addressed is censured again and again for narcissism in peril of sterility:

But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes,
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.

Shakespeare was quite familiar with the disease, having suffered all his life from its delicious poison. When he spoke of Narcissus in his tale of Adonis it was with the poignancy of self-revelation:

Narcissus so himself himself forsook,
And died to kiss his shadow in the brook.

The voice of the disease may be heard lucidly in a letter the Earl of Oxford wrote to his father-in-law in 1576, while traveling in Italy far from his wife. He wrote requesting the sale of some of his lands, against Burghley's advice: "I have no help but of mine own," De Vere said, "and mine

is made to serve me and myself, not mine" (*The Seventeenth Earl of Oxford*, by B. M. Ward, 110). A few month later he warned Burghley—the most powerful politician in England—that he would not discommodate himself to please his wife or her father: "for always I have, and I will still prefer mine own content before others" (*Oxford*, 126). We shall see to what lengths—in imagination—the egoism of Oxford could go, in harmony with the narcissism of "Will Shakespeare."

In the first Sonnet I hear sounded in consonance with the narcissism theme a motive of nearly equal power in the mind of the poet, the motive of identification of Southampton with himself. The theme does not appear on the surface of the Sonnet, and persons who are not convinced by the Looney-Freud hypothesis will not see it. I refer to the lines extolling the poet's beloved friend as

now the world's fresh ornament

And only herald to the gaudy spring.

Southampton's birthday fell on October 6, and I suppose that Shakespeare designed the epithet as a compliment to beauty that could make winter seem a swift interlude before the season of the rose. (The italics of the word *Rose* in the Sonnets have led some scholars to the fancy that the word implies a complimentary pun on Wriothesley, which could be pronounced as if it were Rosily.) But the phrase "herald to the gaudy spring" fits Oxford better than Southampton, since the former was born on the threshold of the English spring, on April 12, 1550. The epithet is therefore interpretable as an unconscious memory of the poet's own brilliant youth, when he was a royal ward (like Southampton), in the care of Lord Burghley (like Southampton), and the observed of all observers, like his young love. The poet recalls the beauty of Southampton's mother as she was when they were both young at Court:

Thou art thy mother's glass and she in thee
Calls back the lovely April of her prime..

(Sonnet III)

The choice of April to represent the flowering time of beauty cannot be an accident. In recollecting the April of his own prime while contemplating Southampton's good looks, Shakespeare may have been conscious of a wish to be the lad's father. The desire probably acted as the preconscious form of the deeper identification concept.

Parenthetically we may note here that in Sonnet III we get the application of agricultural imagery to the womb and sexual intercourse, just as we get it in the dedication to *Venus and Adonis*.

The second Sonnet, it appears to me, sets the chronological mood of the beginning of the sequence. It warns the poet's love of the ravages that "forty winters" will perform on his brow and body. Naturally, orthodox investigators have not found any particular significance in the selection of the number forty to stand for old age. The favorite son of Stratford, as we have already remarked, was only thirty when the "first heir" of Shakespeare's "invention" was a year old. Edward de Vere, on the other hand, was then forty-four.

In the tenth Sonnet we come across the first avowal of affection between the poet and his young friend: "Make thee another self, for love of me," Shakespeare exclaims. In Sonnet XIII he appeals to him frankly as "Dear my love." At the same time he reminds the beloved that he is fatherless, and comes of a fine house in danger of decay.

Sonnet XIV, modestly claiming for the poet a certain skill in astronomy, declares that in the eyes of the beloved he beholds two stars that predict "Truth and beauty shall together thrive," if the young man weds as Shakespeare wished he would. If not the poet prognosticated: "Thy end is Truth's and Beauty's doom and date." Truth here can only mean the kindred whose alliance with the beauty of Wriothesley is keenly desired by the writer. There can be no doubt as to the family meant if we accept the viewpoint of a non-Oxfordian such as J. A. Fort, that "the sequence of sonnets on the subject of marriage begin when

Southampton was 'contracted' to Lady Elizabeth Vere" (*A Time-Scheme for Shakespeare's Sonnets*, 1929, 23). The name Vere was frequently punned upon by Elizabethans because of its likeness to the Latin for "true." The motto of the house of Vere punned on the name: *Vero nihil verius* (Nothing truer than truth). Editors have weakened the force of the paronomasia in the Sonnets by removing the capital T from Truth.

Shakespeare's plea for Beauty's marriage with Truth in order to make his dear youth a father after his own heart concluded with Sonnet XVII. After this the sequence alters directly to one of love-making, and the theme of identification sounds ever more clearly. "My glass shall not persuade me I am old," the poet affirms, so long as his love remains youthfully fair. When time's furrows are driven across his hero's face, however, he expects to die.

For all that beauty that doth cover thee

Is but the seemly raiment of my heart. (XXII)

How could Shakespeare's flesh survive, he wonders, when Southampton's carnal brightness is gone? The homoerotic nature of their attachment emerges plainly in the announcement at the close of this poem: "Thou gav'st me thine (heart), not to give back again." It was written, I think, toward the end of 1594, after the younger Earl renounced his contract with Lady Elizabeth Vere.

The eighteenth Sonnet assures the beloved youth that he will attain immortality even if he does not have children by "Truth." Shakespeare's "eternal lines" will gain him eternity. Some critics have judged this boast of the poet's transcendence over death, and the passages in other Sonnets just like it, as mere conventional echoes of the classics, which promised the preservation through time of the names of all those who befriended the bards. On the contrary, I judge these passages to be a childlike declaration of the poet's megalomania. He hated the very thought of death, especially since he felt that he would die before the brand of "vulgar scandal" and public disgrace on his name and household

could be erased. Having failed to achieve the immortality of "public honour and proud titles" by services more masculine, he revived the fantasy of omnipotence which he shared with all infants in his infancy, and assured himself that he would obtain immortality by the road of incantation, poetry, which was rather disdained by men of affairs and state in his day. The Earl of Southampton would consequently become immortal too: "My love shall in my verse live ever young" (XIX). In the strained meter of the adverb "ever" Oxfordian ears detect a play on the name E. Vere. If they are right we have here another instance of the imaginary identification between the great writer and his boyish love.

Their homoerotic relation is clarified in Sonnet XX, which humorously complains that there can be no sexual intercourse between Shakespeare and the "Master-Mistress" of his passion, because Nature has thwarted the former's irrepressible lust by her addition to the beloved's beauty of the mark of the male. "She prickt thee out for women's pleasure," Shakespeare asserts, and the obscenity should suffice to end all speculation concerning his homosexuality. Charges of pederasty were brought against Oxford in 1581 by his enemy, Lord Henry Howard, but there is no evidence that he ventured beyond a poet's uncontrollable fancy of inverse love. It is possible that Shakespeare experimented with male-love, but in general, we may be sure, his neurosis (which Freud diagnosed in *The Interpretation of Dreams* as hysteric—cf. the Modern Library edition of his *Basic Writings*, 310) would subdue the perversion. One sign of the dramatist's neurosis often manifested in the Sonnets is insomnia. But he dares not give us a clear glance at the thoughts that will not let him sleep.

We know that Shakespeare suffered from misfortunes of which history has left us unmistakable traces in the life of Edward de Vere. The Earl of Oxford had never succeeded in gaining the confidence of his Queen, and her prime minister, the Lord Treasurer Burghley. His efforts to get military and naval glory ended in frustration, and never received

the public attention that Lord Henry Howard's accusations of treason brought him. Calumny stuck to his name from the time of his birth, when the imputation of bastardy was made against him. The money necessary to combat such slanders in the courts of public opinion he spent in pursuit of his pleasures, among professional authors and actors, and similar people of ill repute. In the summer of 1594 Oxford wrote to his former father-in-law pleading for legal aid in the improvement of his fortune. He promised Burghley that he had resolved "not to neglect, as heretofore," the chances to amend his estate (Ward, *Oxford*, 312). Out of royal favor, the Earl lived in the suburbs of London, Stoke Newington or Hackney, and became practically a stranger to the Court which he once dazzled with his talents. In the light of this fact alone does the Sonnet make sense, in which Shakespeare tells Southampton that he cannot associate with him in public and show affection freely,

Till whatsoever star that guides my moving
Points on me graciously with fair aspect,
And puts apparel on my tatter'd loving,
To show me worthy of thy sweet respect. (XXVI)

Oxfordian analysis finds more than a banal astrologic reference in the line about the poet's star. The Earl's coat of arms carried a solitary silver star, which legend said blazed there in memory of a miracle to which a star had guided an ancestor's troops during the first Crusade (Ward, 4). The poet Andrew Marvell may have been thinking of this myth when he composed his celebration of the union of the Fairfax family and "starry Vere".

Shakespeare confesses in Sonnet XXIX that he lives despised by Fortune and the eyes of men, in "outcast state". In the next poem we learn that his mind dwells on "old woes," and occasionally cries "For precious friends hid in death's dateless night." Like Othello (Act V, Scene ii) he claims that his eyes are unaccustomed to tears. Nevertheless he seems to have a multitude of aged griefs to weep over,

above all, "love's long since cancel'd woe." He has outlived so many friends (XXXI). The love he once gave many now belongs to one alone, the Earl Henry. (From this avowal we must conclude that the feeling of Shakespeare for his wife was no sacred passion.) "Thou," he cries to Southampton, "hast all the all of me." The outcry repeats the idea of the dedication to *Lucrece*. Southampton apparently did not esteem the possession as highly as Shakespeare did. The young man even preferred the poetry of artists younger than his friend, elaborate stylists like George Chapman, whom I take to be the rival writer so elegantly derided in the Sonnets.

The following Sonnets indicate that Shakespeare and his love sometimes met at the latter's request, and *Willobie his Avis* informs us how well known their intimacy was. The tale of *Willobie* about the love of H. W. for a woman whom W. S. had tried vainly to conquer is not unlike the story that these Sonnets tell. They allude to a sin the poet's dear friend has committed, a "sensual fault," involving someone whom Shakespeare regarded as belonging to him. The hint of rivalry in love is unmistakable. The poet forgives the "sweet thief" who has robbed him of the woman in question, but their friendship is now bereft of all its glamor and idealism. Shakespeare's quickness in adopting the Christ posture was not simply histrionic. No doubt he was deeply disappointed to learn that Southampton cared more for a mere female than he did for the sublime Will. But he was afraid to lose the voluptuous Wriothesley. He stood ready to meet the younger lover on any terms he might whimsically select, realizing that their companionship could do the youth shame (XXXVI). This self-denial and sacrifice was ascetic as well as practical. The poet's profound masochism relished his isolation from mankind, which he portrayed in drama after drama with all the wormwood enmity of an English Timon, a misanthrope with a special bias against women.

In Sonnet XXXVII we are presented with the vivid

image of the dramatist as "a decrepit father . . . made lame by fortune's dearest spite." He rejoices to think that by his love he may catch part of the splendor that is Southampton's from beauty, birth, wealth and wit. Enjoying that young brightness he simultaneously enjoys the illusion that he is no longer "lame, poor, nor despis'd." It is impossible to take this self-portrayal seriously and believe in the Stratford story, or the allegations made on the authorship question for Francis Bacon, William Stanley, Roger Manners, and the other luminaries of Tudor times who have been placed in opposition to the Looney-Freud hypothesis. Only the Earl of Oxford could be said to have been lame, poor, and despised at the time this poem was written. I have already spoken of the wound that Sir Thomas Knyvet inflicted on the Earl in 1582 in a duel over the fatal lady Anne Vavasor. I have mentioned his financial straits, after having sold 56 properties in land between 1572 and 1592. As for his being despised, it will be enough to quote Sir Walter Raleigh's remark to Lord Burghley when the latter, in May 1583, appealed for the knight's assistance in regaining the Queen's favor for the scapegrace Earl. "I am content," Raleigh wrote, "for your sake, to lay the serpent before the fire, as much as in me lieth; that, having recovered strength, myself may be most in danger of his poison and sting." (Ward, 244.) Raleigh was thinking of De Vere's vitriolic wit. Whatever the reason for their hostility, the fact remains that the Earl had more enemies at Court, and in the city and country, than he had friends. According to the Sonnets, indeed, he had but one friend left (in 1594), Henry Wriothesley. And even he did not hesitate to steal the poet's girl.

Writing of Oxford's sale of his lands reminds me that he was particularly lavish in 1576 when he travelled to Italy. In my opinion, Shakespeare had the Italian tour in mind when he declared (in XXXIII) that he had seen many a glorious sunrise over mountains. And he must have been thinking of the ruin of his birthplace, Castle Hedingham in Essex, when he writes of having seen "sometime lofty tow-

ers" torn down. In December 1591 the Earl alienated the house of his ancestors to his three daughters and former father-in-law. In the same Sonnet which evokes the memory of ancient towers (LXIV) the poet remembers having watched the sea devouring the shore and the earth recover space from the sea. The thoughts of lofty towers and the sea were naturally linked in Oxford's mind because he had spent his boyhood within seven miles of the North Sea, and once occupied a family home at Wivenhoe by the sea, in a house famed for towers that served as sea-marks. Here the Earl pursued the interests which he named his "country Muses" (Ward, 89).

Sonnet XL reiterates the dramatist's appeal to Southampton not to become his foe on account of the woman they both coveted: "I do forgive thy robbery, gentle thief," Shakespeare repeats, darting after the honey of his charity the sting of irony at Southampton's "Lascivious grace." Not even the beloved Earl could feel free from the poet's poison, when the impulse to sarcasm swayed him. But Shakespeare refused to suppress the impulse when his rival took the liberty of making love to the woman in the poet's own *seat*. The allusion to Shakespeare's "seat" in Sonnet XLI has gone too long without comment from admirers of the Stratford myth. We would like to hear their opinions on which of Shakespeare's residences his noble friend employed.

In the forty-second Sonnet the theme of identification is openly stated, with a brutal and subtle confession of the perverse pleasure which the dramatist derived from the treachery of his two loves:

But here's the joy: my friend and I are one;

Sweet flattery! then she loves but me alone.

The repressed homosexuality of Shakespeare becomes painfully manifest here. It is obvious that his imagination rioted in fantasies of the woman yielding herself to the man in whom he saw the mirror of his own youth. Unknown to his infinitely clever ego was the fantasy beneath these thoughts, the fantasy of taking the woman's place. That she possessed

the "master-mistress" of his passion, he admits, was the chief cause of his sorrow. He could get joy out of it only by fancying himself sharing her joy. The identification with this mysterious woman was, I have no doubt, deeper than Shakespeare's identification with the noble youth. In the former I find the central factor in the poet's neurosis. She stood in his mind's eye for the unconscious image of his mother, for whose lost love he suffered all his life. The proof of this unfortunately cannot be offered in a study of the Sonnets by themselves. The plays provide most of my evidence. I have taken one, a farce apparently far removed from the theme of incest, *The Comedy of Errors*, and demonstrated by means of a detailed analysis of the whole play that Shakespeare's chief sorrow came from the loss of his mother's love—after he had introjected her to his heart of hearts. But he struggled until his death to convince himself that he did not need her, nor anybody like her. Spurning her entire sex he searched for love among men and lads, but narcissism of the intensest type made him turn away from all but the few whom he could consider reflexions of himself. When these failed him he retreated with happiness to the gentlemen and ladies of the empire of his dreams, modelled unconsciously after the members of his unholy family.

It has been surmised that the books by Shakespeare of which he speaks in Sonnet XXIII were groups of his poems. The idea has presented itself to me that they may have been his published plays. The opening simile of the Sonnet, comparing himself to "an unperfected actor on the stage," shows that he was thinking of the theater critically when his books came to mind. Very likely he was thinking of his plays again when he composed Sonnet XLVIII. Here he writes of "jewels" he owns which his beloved considers "trifles". The jewels of a poor artist are his masterpieces; only works of art would have been viewed as trifles by persons not artists belonging to the master-workman's circle. Shakespeare speaks with pride of the care with which he took his way, a phrase signifying a decision that marked a major change in his life.

The lines that follow, concerning the locking of his jewels "under truest bars," indicate that the decision had to do with his career as a writer. It must have been the resolution to conceal Edward de Vere behind the mask of William Shakespeare. His friend's failure to esteem his poetical works should not surprise us, not after perusal of the eighth Sonnet which informs us that music which gives the poet happiness offends the beloved; he does not listen to it gladly. Southampton, in short, was one of those men whom *The Merchant of Venice* warns against (V, i) because they are "not moved with concord of sweet sounds." Such men, the drama declares, are fit for treasons. It would be interesting to know if the warning was written with Southampton in view, or his fiery friend, the Earl of Essex, whose insurrection in 1601 nearly cost Henry Wriothesley his head. We know that Southampton was extremely fond of the theater, but there is no evidence in his correspondence that he cared for its products in literature. Plays were just pastimes for him. His empiric intellect wanted nothing more than amusement from the "millions of strange shadows" which his theatrical friend beheld when he thought of their love. In the description of Adonis, Shakespeare remarks (LIII), he finds a counterfeit of his friend. The remark furnishes a clew to the meaning of *Venus and Adonis*. Shakespeare also beholds his beloved Earl when Helen of Troy is pictured. Personally I see the Earl of Southampton portrayed in Shakespeare's comedy of the Trojan war as the prince Patroclus, the beloved comrade of Achilles.

Sonnet LV takes off for a moment the poet's mask of humility, drops the pretense of his phrases about "untutored lines," "my slight Muse," "poor rude" verse. In an ecstasy of egoism he tells Southampton that no royal monument will outlast "this powerful rime" which he creates. The unpoetic youth probably smiled at the promise that his praise and memory would live in Shakespeare's verse till doomsday. Maecenas certainly took Horace more seriously. The English genius's affirmation of his own greatness rings tragically to us

because we realize how deeply he suffered from the necessity of hiding his identity. De Vere had to keep the world from discovering that he was England's supreme dramatist, for the discovery would have meant his damnation as a nobleman. The stains of a playwright's ink on his hands held up before the House of Lords would have made his family the laughingstock of the kingdom. He felt that he had disgraced the house of Vere enough. Hiding himself was not too hard, since the actor in him loved to play at masquerades. But he fretted and fumed behind the veil, and the libido of his exhibitionism beat imperiously against it. The temptation to betray himself to the world's eyes can be sensed in virtually all his plays.

It was the compulsion for concealing himself, for keeping his connection with Southampton a secret, rather than sheer passion that made Shakespeare describe himself as the young man's slave (LVII, LVIII). The poet felt that he lived as in a prison ("outcast state"). He had to restrain his vanity when Southampton put it through capricious ordeals in arranging their meetings. Morally the word "slave" has no more significance in this context than the word "vassal" (LVIII), which the poet had already employed in Sonnet XXVI. The younger man never exerted on the artist's imagination the effect that Shakespeare's self-love, with its attendant self-chastisement, could always contrive. No, says the poet (LXI), it is not the spirit of Southampton that troubles his sleep with shadows resembling the youth. It is "Mine own true love that doth my rest defeat." Shakespeare almost touched here the core of his neurosis. He apprehended that there was something in his own spirit, his ego, that while inspiring passionate love managed to "pry" into his deeds—"To find out shames and idle hours in me." The essential parenthood of the conscience was never delineated more potently. If only the poet had possessed the pitiless self-probing strength to determine the sex of that "true love" whose vigilance broke his sleep! In learning precisely whose mental slave Shakespeare was, we would immensely advance our knowledge of human bondage in general.

The truth finally breaks out, in the sole form Shakespeare could recognize it:

Sin of self-love possesseth all mine eye
And all my soul and all my every part;
And for this sin there is no remedy,

It is so grounded inward in my heart. (LXII)

Few writers have been so infantlike frank. Shakespeare proclaims that he is convinced, "no face so gracious is as mine, No shape so true, no truth of such account." (It will be observed that "truth" is fetched into the verse to represent all the other qualities claimed by the poet distinct from the physical. "No truth of such account" "is nearly a paraphrase of *Vero nihil verius*, Oxford's motto.) Megalomania could scarcely reveal itself more nakedly: "I all other in all worths surmount." When Shakespeare looks in a mirror and sees himself "Beated and chopt with tann'd antiquity," he realizes that his self-adoration is a sin. He does not say it is wrong, in the unreligious sense. Even the ravages of the years on his countenance were beautiful in his eyes. Perhaps he felt that by these wounds he was exalted closer to Christ, with whom he sympathized in most peculiar fashion, as the use of the symbol of the cross throughout these poems and the plays will testify. Like Christ Shakespeare was willing to lose the whole world if that was the price for conserving his own soul. What the dramatist failed to understand was the way his soul was divided against itself. He was keenly aware of the civil war within his mind but had at best ephemeral perceptions of the character of the combatants. He could say sincerely that Southampton was "all the better part of me" (XXXIX) and in the next breath condemn him, from the star-chamber of his arrogant ego, as a lascivious thief and traitor. The better part of the poet thus condemned his bad part. Always he sang of himself.

People who praised Southampton's external charms, according to Sonnet LXIX, talked differently about his mind and deeds. The churls then hinted that his "fair flower" (the Rose) grew too close to rank weeds. Bridget Manners,

who was invited to contemplate matrimony with him in 1594, objected that he was fantastical and "so easily carried away." In outbursts of rage, frequently over straws in which he saw his honor at stake, he would risk bloodshed, at least tear his adversary's hair. His loving critic had done far worse in his youth. De Vere killed a servant in his father-in-law's house when he was seventeen; the inquest jury refrained from curiosity about the "accident." After deserting his wife in 1576 he committed adultery, and Anne Vavasor contended that he was the true father of the boy she bore in the Queen's palace in March 1581. Lord Henry Howard and Charles Arundel drew up an indictment against Oxford, including so many crimes and rumors of crimes that you might conclude, if you gave them credence, De Vere was the archfiend of the age. Shakespeare might attempt to answer, "Slander's mark was ever yet the fair" (LXX), but mankind is bound to believe that where there is so much smoke there must be some sparks. Slander, at any rate, made the unlucky Southampton dearer to Oxford. Incidentally, from the couplet—"Thou hast past by the ambush of young days, Either not assail'd, or victor being charg'd," I would guess that Sonnet LXX was composed before the Court started whispering, in 1595, that Southampton was treating Elizabeth Vernon with "too much familiarity."

Because of the infamies which had accumulated on his reputation Shakespeare determined that his "poor name" should not be remembered by his friend (LXXI). To prevent the telling of "some virtuous lie" on his behalf, when the future would demand to know what merit in him had earned anyone's love, the poet resolved:

My name be buried where my body is,
And live no more to shame nor me nor you.
For I am sham'd by that which I bring forth,
And so should you, to love things nothing worth.
(LXXII)

Once more we are confronted with the public opinion of Shakespeare's productions, the "trifles" he privately con-

sidered jewels. This time we have the conception of his poetical works not simply as playthings, unworthy of an aristocrat's earnest handiwork, but as the objects that compel the poet to inter his name. Could we be told in plainer English that William Shakespeare is actually a *nom de guerre*, a weapon in the struggle for survival of the artist in Earl Edward de Vere?

The dramatist feels at liberty to speak so plainly for the reason that he feels himself approaching the verge of death (LXXIII). We have the word of the learned Francis Meres (in *Palladis Tamia*, 1598) that the sonnets circulated only among Shakespeare's private friends. It appears that these were mostly artists who respected his anxiety to hold the world ignorant of his identity. They had all experienced his bounty in the days of his youthful affluence. I doubt whether any member of his class except Southampton was acquainted with "William Shakespeare", though Oxford's wife, and Anne Vavasor, may have known that he wrote plays for the common stages. None of those he trusted, however, was so discreet as the fugitive from Stratford, who became one of the leading grain-speculators and money-lenders in his home town. And no finer comedy came out of the times than the legend that this rough-hewn gentleman was the nonpareil poet of the Earl of Oxford's *invention*. The comedy struck Oxford himself as worthy of two scenes in his plays, the Induction to *The Taming of the Shrew* and the dialogue between Touchstone and William in *As You Like It*. Possibly it also inspired the dream of Nick Bottom in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. There were occasions when the dramatist feared that he would be found out, on account of the singular power of his literary method. He wrote an entire Sonnet on the matter (LXXVI):

Why write I still all one, ever the same,
And keep invention in a noted weed,
That every word doth almost tell my name,
Showing their birth, and where they did proceed?
The sudden shift of accent in the word "ever" marks the

author's signature. One reason for the sameness of his style, he declares, is: "all my best is dressing old words new." This can only refer to his practice of rewriting the dramas of his youth. Orthodox erudition long ago depicted Shakespeare as commencing his career with theatrical tailoring, the revising, patching, and interpolating of poetry in other men's plays. This grotesque notion of the way his genius went to work was necessary to support the Stratford fantasy. Academic inquiry is now leaning to a chronology of the plays which is sure to upset the Stratford cart, one which furnishes ammunition for the Looney-Freud theory. When one professor envisions *Romeo and Juliet* as an old play in 1592, and another sees *Hamlet* on Shakespeare's stage in 1588, the dawn of victory cannot be far off for the Oxfordians, who date the commencement of Shakespeare's dramatic career in 1576, when "The History of Error" was prepared for the Queen's stage, the play that became *The Comedy of Errors*.

The style of Shakespeare (defined by Thomas Nash as Chaucerism) seemed so antiquated when the Sonnets were made, by contrast with the "new-found methods and compounds strange" of Chapman, Jonson, and Marston, that young Southampton, always looking for novelty, neglected the old player-Earl for the sake of his competitors. Their parade of erudition, their metaphysical flights, and tireless experiments with language, in short, their Art, attracted Southampton more than the homely-looking style of Shakespeare, which he defended as "natural". In mockery of his rivals he instructed Wriothesley: "thou art all my art, and dost advance As High as learning my rude ignorance" (LXXVIII). In other words, love prompted him to write, not the craving for fame, nor any of the other motives that drove Chapman and the rest to pen-toil. The wonder is that anyone should have taken Shakespeare's mock-modesty for the real thing. Even the ingenious John Milton—who shared all the academic defects of the rivals—condescended to chatter about Shakespeare as if he were a warbler of "native wood-

notes wild." The greater artist put his finger on the main fault of the Chapmans and Miltons in a single clause: "What strained touches Rhetoric can lend" (LXXXII). Shakespeare did alter his verse toward the close of his life, but he insisted that his art stayed ever subservient to nature, to truth:

Thou truly fair wert truly sympathiz'd
In true plain words, by thy true-telling friend.

His "tongue-tied Muse," he says, goes on her way regardless of the fashions in literature (LXXXV). The epithet points to the Sonnet (LXVI) in which Elizabethan culture is denounced because of its hatred of free speech: "art made tongue-tied by authority."

Southampton's absences made his lover miserable, but Shakespeare loved his melancholy too. Nothing could part him from it. One of the boyish lyrics of the Earl of Oxford succinctly describes the favorite posture of Shakespeare:

I am not as I seem to be,
For when I smile I am not glad;
A thrall, although you count me free,
I, most in mirth, most pensive sad.

These lines were written many years before the disasters of Oxford's life, though not long after the death of his father and his mother. It is safe to say that, with the exception of these two deaths, he was responsible for practically all the misfortunes that happened to him. He could not resist danger if it lured him with the right baits of sex and politics. I am inclined to believe that he unconsciously left himself open to the blade of Sir Thomas Knyvet which, in March 1582, nearly put a period to his romance and tragedy. In the seventy-fourth Sonnet he grieves over his fate, seeing his corpse descend to the grave, "The coward conquest of a wretch's knife." Yet he was not altogether woeful over the wound; there lingered about it an erotic pulse. "Speak of my lameness, and I straight will halt," he tells the beloved Wriothesley (LXXXIX).

Thou canst not, love, disgrace me half so ill,
 To set a form upon desired change,
 As I'll myself disgrace.

The grimace of the paranoiac shows itself under this extreme humility, which tempts the sadism of the loved one. "Hate me when thou wilt," Shakespeare cries: "Now, while the world is bent my deeds to cross" (XC). In 1594 Oxford was gnawing his heart in chagrin over his failure to obtain a royal monopoly of the imports of oils, wools, and fruits, from which he hoped to restore his family's wealth. He also applied in vain for the stewardship of the Queen's Forest of Essex. Next he strove to convince her Majesty that he could administer profitably the tin mines belonging to the Crown. In March 1595 he begged Lord Burghley: "Have a feeling of mine unfortunate estate, which, although it be far unfit to endure delays, yet has consumed four or five years in a flattering hope of idle words." (*Calendar of the Cecil Manuscripts*, V, 149.) Such were the "petty griefs" that Shakespeare endured when he expected Southampton to desert him.

When the poet estimated the value of Wriothsley's love to him he measured in terms of perishing aristocracy:

Thy love is better than high birth to me,
 Richer than wealth, prouder than garments' cost,
 Of more delight than hawks or horses be. (XCI)

The allusion to garments, and the line about clothing "new-fangled ill" which precedes it, are significant in view of the constant pleasure that the Earl of Oxford got from clothes. When he was sixteen his garments cost about a thousand pounds a year (Ward, 31), and when he was thirty-one his passion for apparel seems to have brought on him public ridicule (same, 189, 193). The satirists harped on his effeminacy: "No words but valorous, no works but womanish only . . ."

When Gabriel Harvey wrote that he was well aware of De Vere's prowess as a duelist on horseback. Unhappily he never had a chance to show what he could accomplish on the

battlefield or in war at sea, although he pleaded with the Queen for service in her army or navy. He remained a soldier in imagination, like his melancholy Prince of Denmark.

Shakespeare may have been thinking of another soldier-hero of his, Othello, when he wrote Sonnets XCII and XCIII. He fancies himself in these poems "Like a deceived husband," who asks only that he be kept in ignorance of his cuckoldry: "Thou mayst be false, and yet I know it not." Since the poet makes no mention of his other love, the sinister lady travestied as Avis, I conjecture that his jealousy at this time sprang from the notoriety of Southampton's affair with Elizabeth Vernon. To the year 1595 has also been ascribed Thomas Nash's "Choice of Valentines," a piece of pornography boldly dedicated to Southampton. Its prelude removes beyond question the meaning of the symbol *rose* so often introduced in the Sonnets. Nash hails the Earl as the "fairest bud the red rose ever bare." One glance at the obscene poem suffices to inform us why Shakespeare warns his hero of the canker that threatens his "fragrant rose,"—"the beauty of thy budding name" (XCV).

For a long time (if we judge by Sonnet XCVII and its two sequels, whole seasons) the poet absented himself from Southampton. It has been conjectured that Shakespeare produced these poems on returning from the provincial tours of the Lord Chamberlain's players. But the poems clearly state that their author was away from London in April, when the playhouses were flourishing. My own belief is that Oxford produced them after visits to the stannaries, the tin mines in Wales, about which he wrote Burghley industriously in April 1595 and March 1596. In the summer of 1596 De Vere spent some days in unknown rural surroundings, and his letter to Sir Robert Cecil of September 6 alluding to the journey is reminiscent of Sonnet XLVIII. It will be remembered that the poem begins, "How careful was I when I took my way, Each trifle under truest bars to thrust." The letter begins thus: "The writing which I have is in the country, for I had such care thereof as I car-

ried it with me in a little desk." By this time the beloved Wriothesley had come to understand the lone loveliness of Shakespeare's poetry. The gulf between it and work like that of Nash, Barnabe Barnes, Gervase Markhem, each of whom dedicated books to Southampton, and fabrications like those of George Chapman, was recognized by contemporary critics, and Southampton himself was too well cultivated, too exquisite in sensuality, not to feel the glory Shakespeare gave him. He probably coveted more poems than the dramatist could produce, and resented the energy which the latter expended on his "trifles". This, I suppose, was the reason for Sonnet C, in which the poet gravely rebukes his Muse for long silence concerning him "that doth thy lays esteem." Shakespeare challenges her to reply if she has been using up her strength on "some worthless song," or "Darkening thy power to lend base subjects light." He finds various sugary excuses for not composing more about his "fair friend," and assures him that three years have made no perceptible changes in his charms. This assurance (CIV), it has been plausibly argued, was delivered late in the summer of 1595. The poet insists that he never swerves from the single theme of his lifework:

Since all alike my songs and praises be
To one, of one, still such, and ever so.

The year 1595 saw the completion of another sequence of love sonnets, by Edward Spenser, a poet cordially acquainted with Edward de Vere (who has been identified as the Willie of Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* and *The Tears of the Muses*). Spenser's *Amoretti* had a happy ending, and were crowned with his wedding. He then turned with fresh energy to the task of preparing the six books of his *Faery Queen* for the press. He travelled from Ireland to London in 1595 to arrange for their publication. I have no doubt that Shakespeare had an opportunity to read the epic in manuscript. The first three books came from the press in 1590 with a series of dedicatory sonnets, including one to the Earl of Oxford, whom Spenser informed,

th' antique glory of thine ancestry
Under a shady veil is therein writ,
And eke thine own long living memory.

Sonnet CVI has been judged by several scholars a tribute to the *Faery Queen*. Indirectly it thanks Spenser for the "antique glory" by applauding his "antique pen".

The dramatist returns to the topic of his jewel-cutting for the pork-pated multitude in the hundred-and-tenth Sonnet. As if in response to a criticism of Southampton for not confining his genius to the lyric and epic, Shakespeare tells the "sweet boy" what the drama means to him. After admitting that he has made himself "a motley to the view,"

Gor'd mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most
dear,

Made old offences of affections new,
and even flirted with untruth on the stage, he affirms,

These blenches gave my heart another youth.

By straying from his proper path as a nobleman and turning his precious dreams into theatric commodities, Oxford renewed the blisses as well as the sorrows of his young manhood. Indeed he preserved by his playmaking the spirit of his boyhood, so that in the whiteness of his age he still looked on life with the sanguine temper, the buoyancy of King Lear. Apparently Earl Edward accepted money for his dramas. He blames "The guilty goddess," Fortune, for not providing a better reward for his labor "Than public means which public manners breeds" (CXI), meaning the theater, which classical philosophy regarded as an expositor and censor of public manners. Shakespeare deplores the fact that his life-work puts on his good name the brand of a business which Englishmen associated with prostitution. By long practice with "motley," his nature almost appeared to be "subdu'd To what it works in, like the dyer's hand." The effect of composing stage blank-verse for years shines from the correspondence of the Earl of Oxford. In 1600, submitting application to his brother-in-law Robert Cecil for the Governorship of Jersey, he spontaneously broke into the charac-

teristic rhythms of Shakespeare: "Although my bad success in former suits to her Majesty have given me cause to bury my hopes in the deep abyss and bottom of despair. . . ." (Ward, 333). The poet appealed to Southampton to pity his doom, and let him go ahead with his dramaturgy.

Toward the end of 1595 Southampton quit the courtier's life and attempted to establish a reputation as a soldier. He schemed with his friend, Elizabeth Vernon's cousin, Essex, for an English expedition to rescue the port of Calais from the Spaniards who menaced and finally captured it in April 1596. In May the two Earls sailed to Spain for a retaliatory attack on the port of Cadiz. With them sailed the brothers Francis and Horace Vere, Oxford's first cousins, two of the most famous fighting men of the period. They set fire to Cadiz and returned to England, rather disappointed with their voyage. In the following July, Essex and Southampton launched an expedition to the Azores, hoping to strike a grand blow at that flank of the Spanish empire. This voyage accomplished little, and after Southampton came home he went to travel on the continent, hardly knowing what to do with his exuberant virility. In 1598 he took a modest position in the group that accompanied Sir Robert Cecil on an embassy to France. In Paris the restless Earl learnt that his beloved Vernon was pregnant. He raced to London, listened to her entreaties, and clandestinely married her. When the Queen found out that the younger Elizabeth, her Maid of Honor, was a mother, she furiously commanded Southampton locked up in Fleet prison. All this time it is unlikely that he maintained his romantic relation with the Earl of Oxford. I agree with those researchers who sense a breach of years between Sonnet CVI (on the *Faery Queen*, published in 1596) and CVII, which refers to the death of Queen Elizabeth ("The mortal moon hath her eclipse endure'd") in March 1603. CXVI, which preaches in the manner of Plato about ideal love, may have been composed in honor of Southampton's marriage, in August 1598. In the same month William Cecil, Lord Burghley, died. This

patriarch of statesmen acted as a father to Oxford from the time he was twelve until the month of his own death. On him the Earl fastened the enmity of his oedipus complex, and transformed his real father into a demigod replete with virtues. Several times Oxford tried to rebel against Burghley's authority, but each rebellion left him weaker than before. He vented his impotent fury on his wife, Burghley's daughter, who rained tears over nearly all the years of their married life. "No enemy I have," wrote Burghley in May 1587, "can envy me this match; for thereby neither honour nor land nor goods shall come to their children." The father-in-law took charge of the feeding and educating of De Vere's three daughters, but the Earl did not exhibit gratitude. "If their father," said the Lord Treasurer of England, "was of that good nature as to be thankful for the same, I would be less grieved with the burden." (Ward, 285.) An excellent picture of their mental relations can be seen in the tragedy of Polonius and his Ophelia. Perfectly respectable scholarship has long been accustomed to pointing out the features of William Cecil in the ancient politician who would not have Hamlet for a son-in-law. In the first quarto of *Hamlet* (1603) Polonius is called Corambis—a palpable hit at Cecil's motto: *Cor unum, via una*. And the likeness between Cecil's maxims and the excessively admired advice of Polonius to his son (I, iii) is pure parody. (Cf. Martin Hume, *The Great Lord Burghley*, 25.) The passing of this paternal figure and the secret nuptials of Southampton must have made Oxford feel half-abandoned and half-emancipated.

After a brief sojourn in Fleet jail Southampton was released, without hope of redeeming his fame while Queen Elizabeth lived. He wanted to go with Essex to quell insurrection in Ireland, in March 1599, and Essex appointed his friend a commander of cavalry. Her Majesty refused to let him serve so. When Essex came home with a treaty of peace from the rebel Tyrone, she raged at him for not pursuing the Irish with fire and sword. Her indignation had ample wind to beat Southampton's head again for support-

ing Essex's policy. The two Earls nursed their hatred of her government until it flared into armed revolt, in February 1601. The outcome of their desperate folly was the beheading of Essex and the imprisonment of Southampton in the Tower of London. The Earl of Oxford was summoned out of retirement in order to serve with the lords who tried the rebel earls. What he felt while he listened to Francis Bacon exhaust an arsenal of law to get the death penalty for his dear friends, none can tell. Oxford had to sign the unanimous decision of the lords for the execution of Essex. His eloquence surely helped to save Southampton's head. One of the first acts of King James, on coming to the throne of England, was to release poor Wriothsley from the Tower. It is reasonable to assume that Shakespeare celebrated this event, in Sonnet CVII, which greets his true love, "Suppos'd as forfeit to a confin'd doom." It is also reasonable to explain CXXV, which presents the poet bearing "the canopy" in a procession of state, as a memorial to the coronation of James on July 25, 1603. The Lord Great Chamberlain of England took first place among the peers in the ceremony, and afterward enjoyed a short exaltation by his Majesty's appointment to the Privy Council. The Lord Chamberlain's actors were chosen to be the King's own troupe. Oxford was **too old to become intoxicated by his new pomp**. Besides the Court still swarmed with men whom he bewildered, who feared his irony, and hated his pride. His enemy Lord Henry Howard was also elected to the Privy Council, where he soon exerted influence to punish Ben Jonson for his tragedy *Sejanus*, which was alleged to be a tribute to Essex and a satire on Howard. Shakespeare's company acted *Sejanus* and continued to pay scant attention to Court warnings against their introduction of political disputes into plays.

The denunciation of the "suborn'd informer" at the end of Sonnet CXXV has not yet been explained. I would like to suggest that it is Shakespeare's expression of contempt for Henry Fiennes, Earl of Lincoln, who in September 1603 sent information to the Privy Council concerning plots

against the Crown. Lincoln urged a state investigation of "those speeches of the Earl of Oxford" that hinted of a conspiracy to place the house of Hastings on the throne instead of the Stuarts. Sir John Peyton, Lieutenant of the Tower, dismissed Lincoln's accusations when he heard of the alleged conspiracy in Hackney. He knew the Earl of Oxford: "I knew him," he wrote, "to be so weak in body, in friends, in ability, and all other means to raise any combustion in the state, as I never feared any danger to proceed from so feeble a foundation." (Cf. Norreys O'Connor, *Godes Peace and the Queenes*, 1934, 104, 107.) Presumably Oxford believed that Lincoln was suborned or incited to play informer against him, by a Howard or a Raleigh.

The song beginning "O thou, my lovely boy"—it is a song rather than a sonnet—CXXVI concludes the sequence of poems devoted to the Earl of Southampton. For the last time Shakespeare glorifies him as a youth apparently free from the common human wear and tear of time. At the same time he warns the "boy" that "Nature, sovereign mistress over wrack," is still to be feared, for the day of her reckoning and his beauty's ruin cannot be escaped. When we recall that Nature personified is but an image of the mother kept in the unconscious as a goddess, we recognize in these lines an utterance of the poet's terror of his mother, a woman whom he could not think of without thinking of death. Psychoanalytic students familiar with the studies of *Hamlet* by Ernest Jones and Fredrick Wertham need no introduction to this dual dread of the dramatist. They can comprehend it this side theory by perusing the letter that the Countess Margery de Vere, Edward's mother, wrote in April 1562, to cast off her shoulders the burden of the boy's financial perplexities. She informed Lord Burghley that his late father had kept "most secret" from her the sources and distribution of his wealth. Now that Earl John was dead she wished to be exempt from the cares of his estate. "I had rather leave up the whole doings thereof," she says, "to my son," who had just passed his twelfth birthday. Let

"my son," she told Burghley, "who is under your charge," have all "the honour or gain (if any be)" from her husband's last will and testament. There is not a breath of affection or concern for the lad in the letter. And not long after the widowed Countess married Charles Tyrrell, a member of the Queen's bodyguard. They resided at Castle Hedingham, Edward's birthplace, while the orphan underwent the pedagogy of Lord Burghley, his guardian, in the capital city. (Ward, 22.) Shakespeare's plays contain many a portrait of mother Margery, the "sovereign mistress over wrack" in his psyche.

I cannot leave the Southampton sequence without a backward glance at four sonnets of peculiar force and importance. The eighty-seventh marks a breaking point, an estrangement between Shakespeare and his boy-love. To me it is a work of humor, bitter humor. Goodby, the poet says: "thou art too dear for my possessing, And like enough thou know'st thy estimate." The poem perhaps taught Southampton a lesson in evaluation of his friends. As we have seen, he came to appreciate the artistry of Shakespeare at least in lyric; and he may have come to see his stature in drama in those months of 1599 when he spent so much time at the theaters, and later when he corresponded with his wife about the affairs of Falstaff. (*The Shakspeare Allusion Book*, 1932, I, 88.) The occasion of the sonnet seems to have been provoked by jealousy, the outrage of Shakespeare over his friend's enthusiasm for a rival bard. Oxford had experienced a similar jealousy in the days when Sir Philip Sidney competed with him in poetry. The most popular product of their rivalry was a series of songs inspired by Oxford's poem, "Were I a King." (See *The Poems of Edward de Vere*, ed. Looney, 38.) John Mundy set this poem to music in his *Tenor*, printed in 1594, about the time when the Farewell sonnet was made. The old wish to be a king ran with fresh vigor in Shakespeare's mind as he wrote the final couplet of his Sonnet:

Thus have I had thee, as a dream doth flatter,
In sleep a king, but waking, no such matter.

On the surface the couplet seems to say that the poet possessed Southampton in the same way a dreamer may possess a kingdom. Below the surface, psychoanalytically interpreted, the lines suggest that the beloved in the dream is a hidden queen. The "master-mistress" of Shakespeare's passion consequently emerges as a surrogate for the "sovereign mistress" of his soul, his mother, whom he unconsciously conceived as a queen with a penis. The meaning of the couplet becomes clearer when we set beside it the speech of Romeo about his last dream (V, i):

If I may trust the flattering truth of sleep,
My dreams presage some joyful news at hand. . . .
I dreamt my lady came and found me dead;—
Strange dream, that gives a dead man leave to
think,—

And breath'd such life with kisses in my lips,
That I reviv'd, and was an emperor.

Sonnet CXIX is actually a sequel to the one before it.

That poem apologizes for unfaithfulness to Southampton. The poet endeavors to explain why he turned away from his friend to make love to a woman undescribed. Sick of the young man's sweetness, Shakespeare went in search of a medicine of "bitter sauces" to purge him before he lost his taste for Southampton's friendship. He found his relief in a siren who poured tears into his heart and raised his temperature to the pitch of madness. He recovered, and went back to his beloved boy, proud of having discovered "That better is by evil still made better." His philosophy assigned a reason for this in his epic comedy *King Henry V* (IV, 1): "There is some soul of goodness in things evil." Let us leave to theologians the question whether violation of the Almighty's canon against adultery is here justified. The question for us is, what kind of woman drew Shakespeare from loyalty to his wife and his friend? Was she the same whom his friend

had stolen from him at the outset of their friendship? The poet gives the impression of reference to Sonnet XXXV (dealing with grief for Southampton's "sensual fault") in CXX, which asks forgiveness for having betrayed Wriothesley for the sake of the siren.

For if you were by my unkindness shaken,
As I by yours, you've pass'd a hell of time.

Whether we consider it philosophy or foolishness, none will question the sincerity of the dramatist's self-defense. There is anguish in it. Hedonism has scarcely shown itself so hideous and honest as in Sonnet CXXI. "'Tis better to be vile than vile esteem'd. . . ." The poem is in fact an excoriation of the society that measures virtue by face-value. Shakespeare exposes the economic ethics of his world, which judges a pleasure just though vile, if one can get away with it respectably. Once more he adopts the Christ posture to accuse people of hypocrisy who pretend to abhor adultery while leering or smirking at his "sportive blood". Immediately after this he adopts the Hamlet pose:

Or on my frailties why are frailer spies,
Which in their wills count bad what I think good!

Shakespeare will not submit to the claim of any woman or human to juridic or moral superiority. Believing himself fashioned in the image of the Almighty, he denies the right of any mortal to score his sins.

No, I am that I am, and they that level
At my abuses reckon up their own.

In the whole range of Elizabethan literature, not one passage has been noted to equal the almost blasphemous audacity of Shakespeare's "I am that I am." On the fringe of that literature there is one document whose writer proclaims himself in the words of The Word, as named in *Exodus* (3: 14). On October 30, 1584, Edward de Vere wrote to his father-in-law protesting against high-handed intervention in his affairs: "But I pray, my Lord, leave that course, for

I mean not to be your ward nor your child. I serve her Majesty, and I am that I am." (Ward, 247.) Could there be two brains in England with the tranquil megalomania to write the Biblical phrase so confident of righteousness? In Oxford and "Shakespeare" alone do we see this colossal narcissism displaying itself in concord with its opposite, the self-effacement which Ernest Jones indicated as the chief characteristic of what he termed the God complex. (*Essays in Applied Psychoanalysis*, 1923, 208.) No other Englishmen exhibited such delight in their inaccessibility, in surrounding their lives with mystery, in playing the *Lord*. Fortunately for Oxford-Shakespeare there was enough of the vulgar voyeur in him to countervail the celestial exhibitionist. The feudal-reactionary trend of his mind failed to overcome his fierce curiosity about the revolutions capital and labor were making in his world. He was not afflicted severely with the habit which Jones calls one of the most distressing traits of the God syndrome, namely, "the attitude of disinclination toward the acceptance of new knowledge." In 1599 Dr. George Baker dedicated to the Earl *The Practice of the New and Old Physic*, one of the pioneer books of Paracelsan chemistry in medicine. Oxford also befriended and employed as his secretary Nicholas Hill, the man who might well be styled the father of atomic theory in English science. And the passion for "the histories of ancient times, and things done long ago, as also of the present estate of things in our days," which his uncle Arthur Golding observed in him at fourteen (Ward, 24), burnt as bright as ever in him at fifty-four. After all, he did not conceive of himself as the Divine Father but simply as the Prodigal Son.

3

After the Southampton sequence come the poems far-famed as the "Dark Lady" Sonnets. They are not, strictly speaking, a sequence; they do not tell a story, nor develop a concatenation of thoughts. In comparison with the polished and intricate rimes that precede them they sound like ex-

plosions. One could liken them to dream-work stript of the secondary elaboration, though they are liberally sprinkled with wit and here and there show off a superficial ratiocination. In the prior series anxiety manifested itself and prevailed in separate poems. In the "Dark Lady" series anxiety is everywhere dominant.

The opening Sonnet of the series (CXXVII) may be reckoned a defiance of the color vogue favored by Queen Elizabeth herself. Under her red-headed Majesty beauty was publicly styled a monopoly of the fair in hue. Dark-haired ladies put on blond and auburn wigs—"Fairing the foul with Art's false borrow'd face," they painted their skins to suit the imperial style. But Shakespeare's mistress, he announces, by the fascination of her black brows and eyes is transforming the fashion. Of course he exaggerates; but if we discount the poetic flamboyancy, there remains the fact that his mistress was a woman of some eminence, capable of setting a style, despite the predilections of the Virgin Queen.

In the next Sonnet we hear the poet murmuring his pleasure over the skill with which his mistress performed on the virginals. Her music excited him erotically. He pretends to think the keys ("jacks") dance for joy under her touch. The line about "saucy jacks" reminds us of a sarcasm Oxford once flung at Sir Walter Raleigh while they were watching the Queen play, in the hour of the execution of Essex. Her Majesty and everyone standing by the instrument knew how active and eager Raleigh had been for Essex's death. When the report of it was brought to the Queen she went on with the music, and Oxford remarked, "When jacks start up heads go down." (Ward, 336). He used the word in the derisive sense that the Nurse uses it in *Romeo and Juliet* (II, iv), but with his typical word-trickery.

Sonnet CXXIX voices the dramatist's anger and remorse for his lust, as if he had just come from a sexual achievement (undoubtedly adultery) which left him dissatisfied, revulsive, in a temper to flagellate himself. He wishes he knew how "To shun the heaven that leads men to this

hell." The forepleasure he calls heaven is cunningly indicated in the ensuing poem, which expresses his happiness on contemplating the head and breasts of his woman. He loves to look at her, to listen to her talk, though her breath is not redolent of Arabia. Yet her power over him, he implicitly affirms, cannot be traced to her external graces. He has heard people of fine taste and judgment say that her face "hath not the power to make love groan" (CXXXI). But she can break Shakespeare's heart. Unbeautiful by conventional standards, she also repels people by her unconventional deeds. Like her lover she disdained the morality of her critics and calumniators. The freedom of this woman frightened him, and in her presence he felt the criterions of truth which he had been taught turn into absurdities. She seemed to make fair foul and foul fair. Shakespeare does not analyse her attraction in the Sonnets: he kisses and curses, that is all. He set her, however, in the forefront of nearly all his dramas, and produced in them as complete an analysis of the Dark Lady as was humanly possible. (Frank Harris assembled the details in *The Man Shakespeare* and *The Women of Shakespeare*, and spoiled the resulting portrait by insisting it was a picture of Mary Fitton, a court lady whose extant pictures prove her brown of hair and gray of eye.)

In the hundred-and-thirty-third Sonnet we learn that the Dark Lady seduced his friend, that is Southampton. She has bereaved me, Shakespeare cries, of "my next self." Their union must be the sin of which he complains in the early poems to Southampton, where he playfully denounced the Earl as a "sweet thief". In the poems to his mistress, on the contrary, he denounces her as the thief, making out his friend a mere victim of superior force. In CXXXIV the poet hints that Southampton became acquainted with her on a visit he made to please the elder lover: the friend "came debtor for my sake," and she greedily took him, like a member of the detested profession of finance to which William Shakespeare of Stratford belonged. How the poet hated

usury! "Thou usurer" was the worst insult he could throw at the woman who held him captive.

The next two sonnets display a veritable riot of puns on the name "Will," which the poet converts into a synonym for sex. If she wishes to have her way, to gratify her will, very well, he writes: "then thou lovest me, for my name is 'Will'." If orthodox erudition wants to embrace the assertion literally, it will have to be taken together with the poems' puns on the penis, and then the gullible scholars will kindly explain why the poet should have showered his name so with smut. I have already made the suggestion that the name "Shakespeare" itself may be viewed as a comedian's banner of virility, just as "Falstaff" could be interpreted as a symbol of impotence. Sexual equivocation on the word "will" was child's play to the mind that invented *Shakespeare*, and we must admit that his childishness sometimes appalls.

The Sonnet we have just quoted charges the Dark Lady with enterprises tantamount to nymphomania. In the following Sonnet she is branded "the bay where all men ride." Shocking as this insult may be, we have to thank Shakespeare for casting it in his immortal verse, for it enables us to identify the Dark Lady. Which of us would not care to know the kind of woman who moved the supreme dramatist so terribly? Curiosity about her character and culture has already evoked an abundance of opinions and conjectures toward her biography. My own inquiry has persuaded me that Shakespeare's black mistress was the Anne Vavasor whom we have encountered as the mother of Oxford's first son and the disputed prize of his fight with Sir Thomas Knyvet. A painting of Anne, said to be by Marcus Gheeraerts, shows that she was extraordinarily pallid and dark, with more strength than sweetness in her countenance. She was not one of the Virgin Queen's Maids of Honor, as many chroniclers have said, but just a Gentlewoman of the royal Bedchamber. Being niece of Knyvet, and allied by blood and wedlock to the Howards and Southwells, she became a

factor in their Roman Catholic intrigues at Court. She must have met Oxford shortly after he separated from his first wife (Anne Cecil) and secretly turned Catholic, in 1576. On discovering that her kinsmen, at least Lord Henry Howard and Francis Southwell, were acting in the interests of Spain, he turned against them violently, and started a feud which did not end until the streets of London were reddened with his blood, Knyvet's, and their servants'. The non-Oxfordian scholar Albert Feuillerat, writing his life of Oxford's fellow playwright John Lyly, was struck by the similarity of this feud and the one in *Romeo and Juliet*. In the course of it De Vere and his Vavasor spent some days in the Tower of London (1581), after the birth of the boy whom she named Edward Vere. This illegitimate son grew up to become a gentleman of considerable renown, for classical learning and soldiership in the Dutch war against Spain. So far as we know, his mother took care of his upbringing, and his father's cousins, the "fighting Veres," gave him the opportunity to win military honor. Meanwhile Anne Vavasor's honor served as a target for all sorts of lewd and hostile wit. In 1584 the Roman Catholic tract known as *Leicester's Commonwealth* spread vicious rumors about her. Her brother Thomas blamed her bad reputation on Oxford, and in January 1585 challenged the Earl to a duel, saying, "If thy body had been as deformed as thy mind is dishonourable, my house had yet been unspotted, and thyself remained with thy cowardice unknown." (Ward, 229.) Oxford refused to fight him. Brother Thomas too gained high praise for his valor in the Low Countries, and his sister may have named her illegitimate child Thomas Vavasor after him. Prior to 1590 she married a merchant, John Finch, who helped to open England's commerce with Russia. It is doubtful whether her assumption of the bonds of matrimony altered Lord Burghley's decision that she was nothing but a "drab". (E. T. Clark, *The Man Who Was Shakespeare*, 1937, 82.) The duties of wifehood did not interfere with her amorous experiments. In 1590 her initials began to appear in the records of the

gallant Sir Henry Lee, records of payments for nameless services she had rendered him. Later she became Lee's mistress candidly, without ostentation. About 1601 another Anne Vavasor was appointed to the Queen's Bedchamber, and the older Anne retired from the Court. She resided with Lee, who in 1605 granted her husband an annuity which Finch sold. The next year Lee wrote his thankfulness for her "loving care and diligence" during a severe illness of his. His gratitude materialized by his last will and testament in a gift of a house and land, with a request that she be buried in his tomb. His family contested the will, accused her of stealing costly cloth, jewels, linen, and corn from the estate, and she revealed that much of these wares had gone to Sir Edward Vere in the Netherlands. In 1618 she was officially charged with having two live husbands, John Finch and John Richardson, the latter a Durham gentleman who shared a farm lease with her. Early in 1621 a High Commission found her guilty of bigamy and sentenced her to pay a fine of 2000 pounds, but the King was merciful and granted the old lady "dispensation from public penitence or other bodily penalty." She lived until 1658. (We are indebted for this account of the amazing Anne to E. K. Chambers' life of Sir Henry Lee.) Historians have as yet unearthed no record of a connection between her and Southampton. When the gaps in her life-story between 1590 and 1601 are filled in, we may be sure the connection will come to light. Meanwhile we shall have to rest content with whatever we can glean from Shakespeare's plays and contemporary chronicles of scandal which seem to allude to the adventurous Anne Vavasor.

We know enough of Oxford's untamed love to understand that he lied when he called her "the wide world's common-place" (CXXXVII). She was not a nymphomaniac, but a woman who combined strong passions with a cool and keen intellect, fond of remarkable men, and disdainful of her age's judgment on feminine integrity. We have the testimony of Sir Henry Lee that she could be gentle, patient,

and kind. Shakespeare himself bears witness (in CXXXII) that her eyes showed pity in a heavenly way. He scorns her as a liar (in CXXXVIII, which first appeared in print in *The Passionate Pilgrim*, 1599). Yet she was unquestionably faithful to each of her lovers—in her own fashion. “On both sides thus is simple truth supprest,” says he. The truth of the Dark Lady’s character was as complex as Shakespeare’s. He fancied that he was speaking the plain truth when he asserted, “She knows my days are past the best.” Past youth, yes; but not past the days when he conceived and carried out his designs for *Antony and Cleopatra*, the tragic history of their romance. The truth about his insults to her is told in Sonnet CXL, where he begs her for more tenderness:

For if I should despair, I should grow mad,
And in my madness might speak ill of thee.

CXLII offers us ground for surmising that the Lady endeavored to dissuade the dramatist from his mad pursuit of her. She voiced her hate of his adulterous yearning, apparently sorry for his wife as well as piteous to him. He seized her rebuke in order to exercise his dialectic, and challenged her to justify the antagonism to his adultery in the face of her own breaking of wedlock laws. She cannot deny that she has “Robb’d others’ beds’ revenues of their rents.” One can discern something like a note of pride in this revelation of his love’s accomplishments with men.

In the following poem we learn that her man-nets were not inescapable. The poet attempts to rouse her sense of shame by drawing a comic comparison of her chase of lovers with a housewife’s chase of some fowl that has eluded her clutch. Shakespeare compares himself to a baby whom the housewife puts down and neglects while pursuing the bird. Vividly, compassionately, he pictures the infant’s predicament, struggling to follow the distracted mother. He pleads with his dark mistress:

But if thou catch thy hope, turn back to me,
And play the mother's part, kiss me, be kind:
So will I pray that thou mayst have thy 'Will,'
If thou turn back and my loud crying still.

My contention that the choice of simile is not accidental, but an utterance of Shakespeare's deepest pain, the sorrow of his bereavement of mother-love, will convince only those who are prepared to think so. Readers acquainted with Ella Freeman Sharpe's analysis of the infantile qualities in King Lear (*Collected Papers on Psychoanalysis*, 1950, ch. xi) will have little difficulty in grasping this notion. As I remarked before, the proof of it is copiously supplied by the plays, whose conflict-structure permits ample scope for the poet's ambivalences, whereas the sonnet, with its bare antithesis of octet and sestet, holds them by short tight reins. As a matter of fact Shakespeare's lyric is less personal than his drama, where absorption in the masquerade-struggle, the plot, induced unconscious betrayal of himself ever and anon.

Sonnet CXLIV, which presents the two loves of Shakespeare, the "man right fair," and the "woman colour'd ill," as angels always hovering by him, comes closest of all the poems to expressing the idea of the author's ambivalences which I have tried to convey. By translating the images of Southampton and the Dark Lady into spiritual forces over his destiny Shakespeare in effect told us that they both represented aspects of his ego. It will be observed that the formal male aspect ("right fair") is actually the more feminine, and the female aspect ("colour'd ill") is not only manly but dominant. The poet's sole hope of seeing the salvation of his friend from "hell" is based on the expectation that his "bad angel" will fire the "good one" out. His own subservience to the she-devil of his unconscious is made plain in the breathless quatrains and last gasp of a couplet in the lyric that follows (CXLV). The whole thing is an effusion of relief on hearing his mistress hesitate after pronouncing "I hate—" and then rescue him from despair

with "Not you." He compares his relief to the clearing of the air when a fiend flies away from heaven to hell. The fiendish attributes of the lady were obviously concepts of Shakespeare's tortured ego religiously defending itself against "supernatural" cruelty, the antipathy of the divine mother he kept in his mind's cathedral, the love-thirst-thwarting superego. From this maternal image flowed the stuff that envenomed Shakespeare's narcissism.

Sonnet CXLVI is a pathetic expression of his narcissism, laughing at himself—"the centre of my sinful earth"—for squandering on clothes, garbing his aged body "costly gay." Ordinarily men dress themselves fancifully to attract the opposite sex. Shakespeare dressed to please himself. Yes, but which part of himself? The presence of this sonnet in the Dark Lady series indicates that it was the maternal goddess in his soul whose approval he coveted, without knowing it. If he denied himself gorgeous garments he suffered pangs of deprivation, like "an impatient child that hath new robes And may not wear them" (*Romeo and Juliet*, III, ii).

There is no use in dwelling on the pathological melody of the ensuing Sonnets, CXLVII-CL. They show how utterly powerless the poet was to liberate himself from his lady's spell. He keeps on asking himself, where is the secret of her potency over him? But his wits are too obsessed with fury and frustrated lust to be useful in exploration of her power. He can only repeat his wonderment that a woman so wicked, so stern, and unpretty, should captivate him. In words that remind us of the unforgettable description of the gypsy queen in *Antony and Cleopatra* (II, ii) Shakespeare confesses that evil becomes his love: he finds a magic of energy and skill in "the very refuse" of her deeds,

That in my mind thy worst all best exceeds.

How profoundly his sex fever affected his metaphysics may be seen in CLI, which interrupts a song about conscience to crack meretricious jokes. Apart from the sick fun over the antics of his penis, the Sonnet has no interest except in

the two lines which declare that when the beloved betrays him, he inwardly abandons his "nobler part" to the body's treason. Here is an unfunny identification of Shakespeare's superior self with the true "master-mistress" of his life. I interpret the poem as an effort to explain humorously how the writer reconciles his conscience with desire for the black wanton. "Conscience is born of love," he says, and his body is too blind to discriminate between the sorts of love that lure his soul.

Shakespeare reveals that the wanton is a married woman (in CLII) who has broken her bed-vow. But her lies are surpassed by his, he vows, since he has sworn that she was deeply kind, loving, truthful, constant. But now—"all my honest faith in thee is lost." He ends by damning her in a most unchristian manner, without a hint of the pardon which Shakespeare in his plays found divinely available to sinners. We may take this final sonnet as the parthian shot of a lover who had been irrevocably banished, ordered to go home—for good.

The last two Sonnets of the volume were probably composed long before the break. They are alternative versions of a minor epigram in the *Greek Anthology*, which Shakespeare may have read in a Latin translation (of 1529). He changed the original for the sake of turning a compliment to the hygienic virtues of the town of Bath, to which he came—"a sad distemper'd guest"—hoping to get a cure for his love-sickness, only to discover that his mistress's influence sparkled in the healing water and mocked him. He was beyond the aid of physic. The two epigrams may have been attempted for the amusement of the "nymphs that vow'd chaste life to keep" as Maids of Honour to Queen Elizabeth, who is glorified as Diana, as usual. To imagine William Shakespeare of Stratford-on-Avon writing these vacation verses is a feat equivalent to believing that Nicholas Bottom—the brazen ass of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*—crooned Shakespearean sonnets into the ears of Queen Titania.

4

When Freud came to England for refuge he received a letter of welcome from J. Thomas Looney. The founder of psychoanalysis answered in June 1938, with a letter beginning: "Dear Mr. Looney, I have known you as the author of a remarkable book, to which I owe my conviction about Shakespeare's identity, as far as my judgment in this matter goes." Freud concluded by "confessing myself to be a follower of yours." This letter (kindly communicated to me by Mr. Charles Wisner Barrell, Secretary of the Shakespeare Fellowship of America) should be more widely known, among psychoanalysts of literature as well as professors and practitioners of poetry and the theatric arts.

1519 Pine St.
Philadelphia, Pa.

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The Psychodynamics of Enuresis

(A Psychoanalytical Study in Rorschach Symbolism)

by

Rose Palm, Ph. D.

AIM OF THE STUDY.

In his "Psychodiagnostics", one of the most original contributions to modern psychology, Herman Rorschach (6) developed the fascinating theory that the way in which a person will perceive and structure formless visual material (the well known "inkblots") closely reflects the structure of his personality. Rorschach furthermore introduced a method of exploring the personality structure by tabulating and scoring the subject's perceptual responses to this amorphous material. In developing his method Rorschach followed a formalistic, statistical approach; he scored the responses by considering such factors as the size of the blot perceived, where it was located on the card and whether the subject saw the blot primarily in terms of shape, color or movement. Each of these scores, as Rorschach demonstrated, corresponded to a particular personality trait. By combining these traits he developed an all-over picture of his subject's personality or of his particular deviations. As the title of his publication indicates, Rorschach conceived of the test as a psychodiagnostic tool, the diagnosis being determined on the basis of *where* and *how* the subject saw his responses. In the "Psychodiagnostics" he paid relatively little attention to *what* the subject saw. If the contents of

responses were at all considered, it was only in their manifest form, reflecting the immediate thoughts of the testee and as an aid in the process of diagnostic determination.

In an address before the Swiss Psychoanalytical Society, early in 1922, Rorschach (7) gave evidence of having widened his original concept of the Test. Thus far he had considered it as an instrument rendering a static, crosssectional picture of the personality. It would—not unlike an X-ray device—indicate which features were present, but not how they had developed. However, in the above lecture Rorschach stated that the test, in addition, may probe depthwise into the personality and may bare the developmental and dynamic workings beneath the surface of its diagnostic structure. He came to this conclusion mainly by paying closer attention to the contents of the responses. In the above lecture he stated that certain responses should be considered other than in their verbal, manifest form. "Some responses", he said, "are rooted in the unconscious however logical they may appear". He went on to say that these responses are "symbols analogous to the symbols of the dream" and that, like in the dream, "the patient is unaware of their symbolic significance and their symbolic ramifications". In evaluating these responses "the stated object is of little importance — like in the interpretation of the dream where the manifest dream content, the dream image, is not the essential thing".

It seems surprising that, while a worldwide literature has sprung up on the Rorschach Test, little systematic research has been undertaken to explore the latent and symbolic aspects of the responses. This may be explained by Rorschach's untimely death, only a few weeks after the delivery of this important paper. It also would seem that, until recently, few Rorschach specialists were fully familiar with symbol analysis while, on the other hand, psychoanalysts had, as a rule, limited knowledge of the Test.

It is the aim of this paper to show that a systematic analysis of the symbolic contents of the Rorschach responses may help to advance our knowledge of the unconscious and

put the Test to new use as a research tool of psychoanalytical science.*

In the following we shall attempt to substantiate this aim by analyzing the contents of the Rorschach responses of enuretic patients.

THE RORSCHACH RECORDS OF ENURETIC PATIENTS.

For some time our attention had been caught by the fact that whenever we tested an enuretic patient, his Rorschach record was marked by a particular group of responses the regular recurrence of which challenged us to further investigation.

We have over a period of time collected thirty-six records showing this group of responses. As we did not find these responses in the records of non-enuretics we felt justified to assume that they reflected, in symbolic modes, certain factors operative in the psychodynamics of enuresis.**

To demonstrate the specific character of these responses we will present the records of ten male patients ranging in age from eight to thirty years. As it may not be necessary to quote their Rorschach records in full, we shall repeat only those responses which appear relevant for this study.

ROBERT L., age 8

Card VIII: Pieces of meat, brown meat — has a stick in it.

JERRY H., age 12.6

Card IV: Then in back it is like a tree and you can see a man's feet behind them.

*While observing this aim we want to state expressly that we do not advocate the abandonment of the formalistic consideration of the responses. We feel that a statistical consideration of the record is imperative for valid diagnostic classification. Symbol-analysis should be practiced in addition to the traditional scoring of the record.

**The presence of this group of responses, in our experience, always indicates overt or latent enuresis. However, it does not follow that a patient who does not show these responses might not be enuretic. We have come to realize that the Rorschach symbols, like dream symbols, are subject to repression.

Card VI: *It looks like a bear skin with some flowers behind it, or a bush.*

Card VIII: *An arrow flying through the air — feathers spread out — and this is the point so when it gets into somebody you can't pull it out.*

JAMES B., age 15

Card VIII: *A tree and some grass. It is usually under a tree.*

MORRIS M., age 17.6

Card VI: *The first impression I got is a rod that was thrown into a pool of mud or water. The bottom part is supposed to be a view to show how the rod came down and separated the water. Like a dagger or a sword it hit the surface, then buried itself in the water or mud or whatever it was. The water looks like they're being pushed aside.*

VICTOR R., age 17

Card IV: *A flower with its root. Looks like a tulip. Everything has a root. Here it must be dirt. The only place where it could be planted; flower has to be planted.*

Card VI: *An old tree stump; tree had to be cut down to have a tree stump. Tree stump has to be cut down pretty long before leaves grow out of it. Tree stump has to be buried in dirt, or the tree will never grow.*

Card X: *Looks like an old tree stump; like the earth. Must be buried in the earth.*

ROBERT S., age 18

Card V: *Billy goat. Hind legs of small goat. Bushes they are hiding behind. He is standing in between bushes, and smaller goat's hind feet stick out.*

Card IX: *Mountains with points and bushes surrounding it.*

Card VIII: Sort of two *wolves* alone. They are both *going into a cave or standing on a rock looking into rocks and dirt.*

MURRAY R., age 20

Card VIII: *It is the delta of a river with an island in the middle. Two rivers come together, start off again — a little mud island in the middle. The way they run together into each other, they seem to come off in a single point, poured together — brought mud with them from a little island in the middle. Tree in the middle, leaves hanging down.*

GUS N., age 19

Card IX: And here you see a *long stem with onions pulled out of the ground — the dirt and the leaves still sticking on it.*

SAMUEL T., age 29

Card IX: Like looking between a bunch of leaves into a garden. *A tree in the middle, leaves around; the trunk is going down into the lagoon — right smack into the water — you even see the reflection.*

WILLIAM B., age 30

Card III: I also see a *man peeking out from behind a bush, looking at me. Looks like trees and the like and he's got his head stuck out between the bushes. Just the hair and the face — no features.*

Card IV: The whole thing itself is a tree. Broken branches and growths on the side of it. *Tree that has been cut. It's a dead tree — and it's very round and large; it's an old tree. Got lots of roots, I imagine. It's so big and round it appears old. This part is under ground. This is where it comes up over the ground and these are starting to grow off it.*

ANALYSIS OF RECORD MATERIAL.

It is easily seen that these responses, on comparison, contain a number of strikingly similar elements which, when analyzed, appear to have equivalent symbolical meaning. On listing these equivalent symbols, they fall into characteristic groupings which we propose to call "symbol complexes". It will be seen that, in the main, three such symbol complexes emerge, which seem to relate to three unconscious factors operative in the psychogenesis of enuresis.*

Reviewing our record material we find the following group of equivalent symbols:

"Pieces of brown meat—it has a stick in it."

"A flower must be planted in dirt".

"An old tree stump has to be buried in dirt."

"An old tree stump must be buried in earth."

"Caterpillars, snakes going into a rocky cave."

"Wolves are going into a cave, into rocks and dirt."

"A little mud island, in the middle of the delta of a river."

"A big, old tree—this part is under the ground."

"Tree trunk going down into the lagoon, into the water."

"A rod thrown into a pool of mud or water; the rod separated the water."

"A dagger or a sword buried itself in the water or the mud; the waters look like they are being pushed aside."

*In our record material these three factors always appeared. This does not exclude the possibility that additional factors may manifest themselves in individual cases.

In the following we shall list the relevant symbols of this complex and their latent meaning.

Rod)		
Dagger)		
Sword)		
Stick)		
Flower (longstemmed shape))	Male genital)
Tree))
Tree stump))
Caterpillars))
Snakes))
Wolves))
Mud island (oblong shaped)))
Tree trunk))
		thrown into, buried in,)
		planted in, pushing)
		aside, going into)
Mud))
Dirt))
Earth))
Rocks)	Feces)
Ground))
Brown meat))
		or)
Water))
River)	Urine)
Lagoon))

The interpretation of the above quoted symbols clearly reveals that the enuretic patient has unconscious coitus fantasies; more specifically, he has the unconscious notion that coitus means penetration of the male genital into fecal matter or (as is indicated by the equation, in certain responses, of "dirt and water") into feces and urine.*

*Cf. responses such as "Wolves going into a dirty cave" or "Tree trunk going into the water".

We seem to deal with the expression of an infantile concept according to which, in the female, feces and urine are in the same confine and are evacuated through the same fecal-urethral passage**, a passage which serves for the sex act as well.

There is an amazing correspondence between this unconscious notion, as it reflects itself in our Rorschach material, and certain infantile mechanisms uncovered by Freud on the basis of psychoanalytical investigations.

In his chapter on the "Interpretation of Dreams", Freud (1) points out that "in childhood the female genitals and anus are conceived of as a single opening according to the infantile 'cloaca' theory, and only later is it discovered that this region of the body contains two separate cavities and openings."

This same conclusion was reached by Herbert (4) through the analysis of an enuretic adult. Herbert states that his patient "had the notion that there existed only one passage in the female (apart from the anus), viz., the water passage which also served for the sex act" . . . "Up till the age of fourteen he looked upon urination as the sex act between man and woman; he thought that . . . impregnation took place by micturating inside the woman".

In a paper on the analysis of a female bedwetter Katan-Angel (5) writes: "she thought that her urine and menstrual blood came out through the same opening" and that "this opening in which she masturbated was the one from which the urine flowed".

Our findings seem to confirm, on a larger scale, that the unconscious adherence to the infantile "cloaca" fantasy plays an important role in the etiology of enuresis. As one of our subjects put it, "The tree has to be planted in dirt or it will never grow".

**Cf. "Rivers come together bringing mud with them".

Symbol Complex II: Castration Fears.

Upon further review of our record material a second symbol complex presents itself. It appears that the enuretic patient frequently describes the genital as follows:

"An old tree stump"

"Tree has been cut, a dead tree"

"The tree has to be cut before leaves grow out of it"

"A long stem with onions pulled out of the ground"

"An arrow flying through the air—when it gets into somebody you can't pull it out".

It needs no further explanation that in these responses we deal with the symbolic expression of castration ideas.*

*In this connection it should be stated that the records of our enuretic subjects contained various other signs pertaining to the idea of castration. They frequently gave responses such as "a man without a head", "an animal without a tail", "a butterfly, its wings cut off", a.o. We have not included these responses in our record material since, in this latter form, they appear also in connection with other symptomatology and are not a pathognomic sign of enuresis. However, they give added support to the assumption that castration fears are an important factor in the psychogenesis of enuresis.

**On the basis of our Rorschach material one might also speculate as to the specific nature of these castration fears. In this connection we refer to the following response: "two rivers poured together — brought mud with them—a little mud island—in the middle". Since the "mud island in the middle" which flows off with the water has—on the card—a distinctly oblong and round shape, one may conclude that the enuretic patient fears that—through cloacal intercourse — the penis will change into a fecal stick and, in this form, will be eliminated with the urine of the woman. Unconscious fantasies of precisely this nature are described by Freud (2). Discussing the boy's early curiosity regarding the absence of a penis in woman, Freud states that "he concludes that the penis must be a detachable part of the body, something analogous to faeces, the first bodily substance the child had to part with".

The assumption that castration fears are another factor operative in the psychodynamics of enuretics corroborates findings by Gerard (3). Reporting on her study of seventy-two enuretic children, Gerard states that "the boys disclosed a preponderance of material indicating a fear of women as dangerous persons who could injure them if they themselves were (sexually) active. In our neurotic cases we find the concept that sexual intercourse is injurious to the parent of the same sex as the patient".**

Symbol Complex III: The sight of the father's pubic hair.

We will now turn our attention to the remaining elements of the record material which, by their inherent similarity, constitute a third symbol complex of the following type:

"Man's feet behind bushes".

"Flowers behind a bearskin or a bush".

"Billy goat standing between bushes".

"Small goat hiding behind bushes".

"Like the shape of leaves, stem in the middle".

"Pointed mountains, bushes surrounding them".

"An old man in a forest where there are trees".

"A tree in the middle, the leaves hanging down".

"A tree in the middle, leaves around".

"A man peeking from behind a bush".

"A big old tree, broken branches and growths on the side of it".

Grouping the relevant elements in the above quoted symbol complex, we find:

Tree)		
Flowers (long stemmed))		
Billy Goat)		
Goat)		
Stem)	Male Genital)
Pointed mountain))
Old man))
Man))
Man's feet))
		Hiding behind, standing)
		between, peeking out)
		from, surrounded by)
Bush))
Skin (furry)))
Leaves)	Pubic Hair)
Forest)		
Growth)		

These symbols, in their latent meaning, reveal that the enuretic patient has unconscious fantasies concerning the sight of the father's ("old man") genital. In this connection we refer to an observation by Gerard (3) who states that "a surprisingly large number of enuretic children had slept in their parents' bedroom and were exposed to (their) marital relations". From our record material we learn something more; namely that it was, specifically, the sight of the father's pubic hair which became of particular significance in these experiences.

Though it seems difficult to understand that the sight of pubic hair should play a role in the development of enuresis, the corresponding symbol complex yet recurs so persistently in the records of enuretics — its mere presence being suffi-

cient to warrant the diagnosis of enuresis—that it must be considered as important. The following observation may help to explain its significance.

A number of responses in our material indicate that the enuretic person unconsciously equates “hair” and “feces”, connecting these two concepts through the associative link of “dirt”. This equation is illustrated by responses such as: “A stem with onions pulled out of the ground, *leaves (hair) or dirt (feces)* still hanging on it.” “A tree going into the earth, *into dirt (feces) or grass (hair)*”.

It would also seem that responses like “A tree usually goes into the grass” represent a condensation of the two thoughts: “the genital usually goes into fecal matter” and “the genital is usually hidden by hair”.

On the basis of the above we seem justified in concluding that the sight of pubic hair, by reawakening the notion that the genital disappears in “dirt”, unconsciously reinforces the cloacal fantasies as well as the particular castration anxiety of the enuretic*. Because of the persistence in the Unconscious of these associations, the sight of pubic hair—fantasied or actual—may precipitate enuretic symptoms.

CONCLUSIONS

Analyzing the Rorschach records of thirty-six enuretic patients we found that they contained a particular group of responses, not present in the records of non-enuretics. The contents of these responses, if considered in their symbolic value, appeared to fall into three characteristic groupings which we proposed to call “symbol complexes”. The interpretation of these symbol complexes pointed towards the existence of three psychological factors operative in the dynamics of enuresis, viz.: the fantasy of cloacal coitus,

*The growth of the child's own pubic hair at the onset of puberty may help to explain the fact that frequently enuresis reoccurs at this time after a latency period.

castration fears and thoughts of pubic hair. These factors appeared as intricately related in all records. If we view this relationship in the light of established psychoanalytical principles, we arrive at the following formulation of the psychodynamics of enuresis: Psychologically, enuresis is a substitute for the unconsciously desired Oedipal sex act which the enuretic patient conceives of as a particular form of cloacal contact. Enuresis is, at the same time, a defense mechanism against such wish, the fulfillment of which is feared to result in castration.* Enuresis, therefore, is the symptomatic expression of a particular modification of the Oedipal conflict. This conflict may be reactivated by the sight of pubic hair on the basis of certain unconscious associations as described in this paper.

This latter finding, that the sight of pubic hair may precipitate enuretic symptoms, has not—to our knowledge—been previously mentioned in the literature. It was brought to light by considering the contents of certain Rorschach responses as symbols of the unconscious, analogous to symbols of the dream.

We do not advocate to abandon the formalistic, statistical consideration of the Rorschach responses, necessary as a means of determining the diagnostic structure of the personality. However, the above finding seems to warrant our initial thesis that additional consideration of the responses as symbols will put the Test to new use as a method of exploring latent dynamics. As such it becomes a valuable tool in the service of psychoanalytical science, especially as a means of checking on the universality of certain unconscious mechanisms found in the analysis of individual cases.

A closer relationship between these two modes of research would undoubtedly help to advance our understanding of human behavior.

*For the specific nature of this castration fear see page 175.

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Two Episodes In The Life of Jacob

by

Dorothy F. Zeligs

Two episodes in the life of Jacob offer material that is particularly provocative for psychoanalytic inquiry. One of these is Jacob's dream on the night he flees from home after stealing the blessing from his brother Esau. The other is his mysterious experience twenty years later, on his way back to Canaan, when a stranger comes out of the night and wrestles with him.

In his book, *Dogma and Compulsion*, (1) Theodor Reik connects these two experiences in a telling fashion. He maintains that the latter episode was displaced by the editors of the Bible and is really an integral part of the earlier experience. Both belong to the puberty rites through which Jacob passed, first, the wrestling with the stranger, signifying the initiatory hostile attack by the father during which Jacob undergoes a partial mutilation, or circumcision, and the second part, the bestowal of the blessing and the consequent rights and privileges of the youth as an adult member of the tribe. Dr. Reik indicates, also, the relationship of these rites with the giving up of infantile incestuous wishes and the readiness for new object relationships. His study treats the Jacob Saga as an expression on an individual level of an experience common to each member of the group. Jacob

1. "The Wrestling of Jacob," *Dogma and Compulsion*, International Universities Press, New York, 1951

is therefore a mythical, or allegorical, figure representing the entire group.

In the present article, the writer will attempt to deal with this material on a different level, presenting Jacob as a real person, an individual whose experiences and conflicts grew out of psychological phenomena as valid in those days as in our own. She sees the two episodes referred to above as important inner experiences at two different periods of his life, each marking a deep emotional crisis and promoting a major step toward maturity.

This view is certainly not a new one in its general sense, but it can only be more fully understood in the light of the meaning one attaches to the two episodes referred to above. In order to comprehend these to a greater degree, it will be helpful to consider briefly Jacob's psychological development and his patterns of behavior.

It is significant that among the ancient forefathers of the Hebrews, it was Jacob, later known as Israel, who gave his name to his descendants. Jacob possessed the qualities that made for survival. The theme of his life pattern might be summed up in the word *striving*, both in the realistic and spiritual areas of life.

Jacob's struggle for existence began within the womb, which he had to share with his twin brother, Esau. It was so intense that Rebekah, the mother, wondered that she could remain alive and asked God the meaning of her ordeal. And God replied,

"Two nations are in thy womb,
And two peoples shall be separated from thy
bowels;
And the one people shall be stronger than the
other people;
And the elder shall serve the younger."

The sibling rivalry thus began within the womb. Esau, ruddy and covered with hair, was born first. Jacob followed, his hand grasping Esau's heel, as if expressing protest at

his brother's precedence. The name *Jacob*, meaning *one who takes by the heel, or supplants*, epitomized this relationship, which was to play such an important role in Jacob's life.

At this point let us consider briefly Jacob's parentage. His father was Isaac, son of Abraham. The most important story in the Bible about Isaac is one in which he plays a passive role. Abraham shows his willingness to sacrifice this only son to God as an act of piety, and Isaac evidently acquiesces without a struggle. According to the story, only God Himself saves the youth, already bound to the sacrificial altar, and substitutes a ram in his place.

Historically this episode indicated a move forward in civilization. The God of the Hebrews, unlike the gods of more primitive peoples, frowned upon the horrible practice of child sacrifice. This was the lesson which Abraham learned and handed down to his people. Psychoanalytically, this attempt of Abraham to offer up his only son to God can be seen as a displaced self-castration, an act of propiation to the Powerful Father. The fact that Isaac was saved at the last moment indicates the strength of Abraham's ego which enabled him to overcome both the primitive beliefs and practice of his age and also any unconscious hostility he may have harbored both toward God and toward Isaac.

This dramatic event epitomized Isaac's position in the family. He had been born when his father was an old man and his mother Sarah no longer young. He was the answer to Abraham's prayers and a reward for his virtue. Isaac thus belonged to Abraham in a special sense, being God's gift to him. What God gave, Abraham showed his willingness to return in the form of obedience to the Divine Will. Thus Isaac never really had a life of his own. He stood forever in the shadow of those two great fathers, Abraham and God.

Isaac's mother, Sarah, was a woman of strong and forceful personality. She was the beloved wife of Abraham's youth and had left the comforts of her native land to share the hardships of a nomadic existence at the side of her husband. To safeguard the rights of her beloved son Isaac,

Sarah went to the extreme measure of having her handmaid, Hagar, and the child this woman had born to Abraham, driven from the camp.

The only son of an overly-protective mother and a powerful father who "walked with God," Isaac's psychic destiny was not hard to foretell. The highly traumatic experience he endured must also have had an ineradicable influence upon his character. He remained a noneity, completely overshadowed by his parents. Indeed, so little was there to tell about him that the compilers of the Bible, as if in an effort to cover up this painful deficiency, relate a few events around his name that are repetitions of what really happened to Abraham, and give him a few of the virtues that clung so abundantly to his father's name.

After the death of his mother, Isaac found a new mother-image in his wife Rebekah. She was chosen for him by the wise Eleazer, steward of his father's house. Rebekah was a woman of kindness, strength, and courage, as the story of her behavior at the well and her willingness to leave her home for a strange land to meet and marry Isaac amply testify. The Bible says, "And Isaac took Rebekah into his mother's tent and loved her. And he was comforted for the death of his mother."

The Bible leaves no doubt about the contrasting characters of the twin sons which Rebekah and Isaac brought into the world, and the distribution of affection in the family. In a few sentences a complete picture is given. "Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field; and Jacob was a quiet man, dwelling in tents. Now Isaac loved Esau, because he did eat of his venison; and Rebekah loved Jacob." The weak, overprotected, and traumatized Isaac, fixated to an oral level, loved Esau, who brought him choice foods. He favored the strong and virile son, the ego-ideal he himself had not attained. Rebekah loved in greater measure the son who represented the spiritual and intellectual aspects of life, qualities which perhaps the woman strives to achieve through her sons as a complementary satisfaction to her own role

as a creator on a realistic level. As a member of the household of Abraham after her marriage, Rebekah was available to the deep spiritual influence which emanated from this great personality. Midrashic literature states that Abraham favored Jacob, regarding him as the superior of the two sons and the one destined to become the leader of the tribe.

Let us consider more fully the impact upon Jacob's development of the important personalities in his life. It was fortunate for him that the weakness of Isaac was compensated for in a large measure by the stature of his grandfather, Abraham, who became a spiritual ego-ideal, a concept sustained and nurtured with the support of his mother. The virility of his brother Esau made him a suitable object for masculine identification, also helping to substitute for the lack of a strong father. For although Esau was the same age, he was so different in physical build and character qualities that he could easily have played the role of an older brother, particularly since his position as the firstborn gave him a special importance in the family, as did also Isaac's admiration for this first son. It is possible, therefore, that the dominant id forces of Esau's personality strengthened similar qualities in Jacob through identification, but also furthered the development of reactive, defensive traits. He had to devise patterns of behavior to deal realistically with his own aggressions and with those of his physically stronger brother, who expressed his emotions more spontaneously. Jacob therefore learned to meet physical cunning with mental cunning, a pattern which he seems to have retained for a large part of his life. While Esau may have been helpful as an object of masculine identification, he also increased the fear of the threatening father in the Oedipal phase of development and may thus have contributed to Jacob's increased conflict in this area.

Jacob's relationship to his mother must have been a complicated one. Her strong personality, with its tendency to direct and control, might have made Jacob into a weak and submissive character. And indeed he is described as a

"quiet man, dwelling in tents," that is, close to home and mother. But Rebekah's strength must have had a predominantly ego quality, which could therefore be directed toward conscious, realistic aims, and she had, moreover, a capacity for genuine object love. Her relationship to Jacob, therefore, while too supportive, perhaps, was not of the castrating type. The fact however that Jacob's mother was a stronger character than his father certainly must have made his masculine development a more complicated one. In his case, it was the mother, rather than the father, who represented the reality principle. His struggle for maturity was therefore particularly intense, for separation from his mother involved a severe renunciation of the pleasure principle without the support of a strong father imago. The energy for this act had to come through an identification with the ego-ideal which the mother herself helped to build up for him. At the same time, therefore, that he had to separate himself from his incestuous id wishes, he had to retain his identification with his mother's ego wishes, or realistic aims for his future. It would not be surprising if a large measure of dependency on a strong mother-imago remained and had to be resolved gradually as a part of his continual struggle for growth.

The first significant act of Jacob's life recorded in the Bible was the well-known transaction by which he obtained the coveted birthright from Esau. This right brought with it both spiritual and material gain, the leadership of the tribe and a double share of the father's wealth. This was a large prize, yet Esau surrendered it readily to satisfy an immediate bodily need. Faint with hunger, and tempted by the freshly-cooked pottage of red lentils and the newly-baked bread, he sold his birthright to his brother, rationalizing thus, "Behold, I am at the point to die; and what profit shall the birthright do to me?" This physically strong man resembled his weak father in his oral fixation; he could not resist the pleasure of immediate gratification for the sake of a greater postponed good, thus indicating his infantile stage

of emotional development and his incapacity for assuming the spiritual leadership of a tribe. The only moral evaluation which the Bible makes of this barter is contained in the words, "So Esau despised his birthright."

This act by which a younger brother overcomes an older one has a familiar folklore quality. It is a kind of wish-fulfillment in which Destiny herself is defied. (2) That which was ordained by the order in which the twins were born is over-ruled by a human act. This gesture of rebellion is one with which we secretly identify ourselves and so the more strongly deprecate. It is obvious that Esau would have made a poor leader of a people destined for a spiritual mission in the world. What other way did Jacob, the "quiet man dwelling in tents," have of getting the precious birthright, which God intended should be his, except by matching his wits against the brute force of Esau?

Jacob's second aggression against Esau was stealing the blessing of the first-born by deceiving Isaac, then ill and blind. This was indeed a planned act of out-and-out deceit, involving a wrong against the father as well as the brother. It was a serious offense and Jacob hesitated to carry out the plan, which was instigated by his mother, Rebekah. But she over-ruled his objections, promising to take upon herself any serious consequences of Isaac's discovery and anger. Jacob was thus placed in the dilemma of disobeying his mother or deceiving his father. He chose the latter, which was, of course, more in accordance with his real wishes.

Jacob had to flee from home to save himself from the wrath of his brother Esau. He started out for Haran, where his uncle Laban lived.

Jacob's flight from home marked an important step forward in his development. The dream which he had at this turning point in his life occurred during that first night, when he was alone in the desolate countryside. His head rested upon a stone and his only source of comfort were

the brightly-lighted skies above him, which shone with the peculiar brilliance and nearness characteristic of that semi-tropical land. Jacob was alone with his thoughts and feelings after that eventful day. Let us, through empathy, try to identify with him. He did not know when he would see his beloved mother again; he was filled with guilt and fear because of the deed he had committed. How could he make good the wrong he had done? Only by utilizing the blessing for the greater good of his people rather than for his own selfish gain. In this way alone would his act of aggression and deceit be justified, or even annulled.

These must have been Jacob's thoughts, these, his resolutions, on that lonely night. It was around his plans and purposes for the future that Jacob gathered courage. He had truly left home and mother behind him, in a psychological as well as a physical sense.

And then came the dream. Jacob saw a ladder reaching from earth to heaven, with angels ascending and descending upon it. And God stood beside him and spoke, telling him that he would be the leader of a great people and inherit the land of Canaan.

The desired justification for his wrongdoing thus finds expression in the dream. It was God's will that he, Jacob, rather than Esau, should be the leader of the tribe. In confirmation of this, God blesses him. This blessing, freely given by the Heavenly Father, justified, or even took precedence over the blessing he received under such different conditions from his earthly parent. It was, in a sense, absolution for his guilt, which he so greatly needed at that moment.

What other aspects relating to his situation does the dream express? There is the sexual symbol of the ladder connecting heaven and earth (father and mother). It may well represent Jacob's infantile Oedipal wishes, reactivated by the experience he had just passed through. An aggression against the father is intimately associated in the unconscious with incest wishes toward the mother. The guilt aroused by this aggression may stir up the guilt of Oedipal strivings.

In stealing the blessing from Isaac, Jacob was making himself the potential head of the household, thus in his unconscious strengthening his death wishes against the father through his anticipation of becoming the head of the tribe. His misdeed, therefore, included a partial acting out of unconscious Oedipal wishes. This may explain to some degree the terror in which Jacob fled from home and the urgency with which his mother, also suffering from unconscious guilt feelings of a similar nature, hastened his departure.

A second explanation about Jacob's leaving for Haran, completely unrelated to the first, is given in the Bible. He is sent by Isaac himself to seek a wife of his own people so that he will not marry a Canaanitish girl and thus bring grief upon his parents, as Esau did. Although exegetical proof points to the fact that the latter version is an interpolation of a later date, the two stories have a unity in the unconscious which must have prompted the editors to place them together, even though on a conscious level they contradict each other. The aggression against the father and its meaning for the unconscious put Jacob into an intolerable situation psychologically in relation to his mother. It was imperative, therefore, that he should get a wife. To return to the place from which his own mother came was to satisfy to some degree the repressed incestuous wishes. Thus, the Oedipal conflict and Jacob's efforts to conquer it come out in the dream. Upon the ladder, framework of the earlier Oedipal structure, appear the angels. These winged figures seem particularly suitable to express both phallic wishes and the renunciation of such wishes. The juxtaposition of the two elements in the dream, the background of the ladder and the angels in the foreground, upon the ladder, might well symbolize Jacob's newly strengthened desire to give up infantile incestuous wishes and utilize this energy for super-ego gains. The same concept is expressed when the Heavenly Father in the dream takes the place of the earthly one in Jacob's life.

Another aspect of wish-fulfillment may also be seen in the dream, a thought for which I am indebted to Dr. Joost Meerloo. The physical separation from his mother, especially under the circumstances which caused him to leave home, strengthened his psychological independence, making it possible for Jacob not only to renounce childish wishes but to allow himself the hope of adult satisfactions. The dream expresses this through the sanctioning, or blessing by the Father of sexual union between a man and a woman, as symbolized by the ladder between heaven and earth.

In his article on "The Symbolism of the Bridge," (3) Paul Friedman reminds us that one of the meanings which the bridge has in dreams is to indicate a transition or change in the life situation of the dreamer. The ladder as a sexual symbol is very similar to the bridge. Jacob's dream certainly occurs at an important period of transition in his life. The use of the ladder symbolism may therefore have this further meaning, particularly if the interpretation of its psychological significance given above is accepted.

Jacob's mood upon awakening is one of reverence and awe. But the vow which he makes to accept the Lord as his God is not made in a spirit of fear and submission, but rather on the basis of a comradely partnership and with a sense of social and spiritual responsibility. If God will do His share, will be with him and protect him, then Jacob will accept Him as God. Thus he established a new identification with an idealized father-image, a step made possible by leaving home and mother. In giving up a larger amount of his incestuous wishes and in overcoming more of his aggressiveness to the father, he also gives up more of his fear.

It is interesting that Jacob's attitude towards God is typical of the Jewish tradition. It does not represent a complete surrender to an authoritarian Father, but a willing acceptance of responsibility in return for the promise of mature satisfactions. (4)

3. Paul Friedman, *The Symbolism of the Bridge*, *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* Jan. 1952

As part of his covenant with God, Jacob asks that he may return to his father's house in peace. With the further development of the super-ego and the renunciation of Oedipal wishes, came the desire for atonement of the aggression against the father and a more peaceful relationship with him.

Jacob's first experience on reaching the town where Laban dwelt was his romantic encounter with Rachel at the well and his "love at first sight." Thus he acts promptly upon the inner awareness of his emotional readiness for adulthood manifested in the dream. Theodor Reik points out that Jacob's falling in love with a girl at the well in the same town where his mother's fate was decided in a similar situation may have been no accident, but was more likely a need to repeat a relationship that had an incestuous foundation. (5) While this factor may have been present, the differences in the situation are also significant. Rebekah was chosen by Eleazar rather than by Isaac himself. She was selected for her kindly, maternal qualities and it was she who had to take the initiative in going to meet her future husband. Jacob's first meeting with Rachel is in an active, masculine role of helping her by rolling away the heavy stone from the well and watering her sheep. Moreover, he reproves the lazy shepherds who are lolling around the well before it is time for their sheep to be watered. It is not Rachel's maternal character but her feminine charms that captivate him. Here is indeed a picture of an energetic and active young man, ready to meet the realities of work and love in a true masculine sense. The "quiet man dwelling in tents" has become an active and purposeful personality. This was made possible through the maturation that comes with the acceptance of moral and social responsibilities and the overcoming of Oedipal conflicts.

4. Brenner, A. B., *The Covenant with Abraham*, *Psychoanalytic Review*, January, 1952, p. 34.

5. Reik, T. *Op. cit.* p. 246

Jacob spent twenty years of his life in the household of Laban. It was a period of growth, marked by industry in his work as a shepherd and increasing maturity in the roles of husband and father. He learned to accept frustration, as in the deceit practiced upon him by Laban, who foisted the unloved Leah upon him instead of Rachel, as his first bride. Did the memory of his own act of deceit, when he took Esau's place, help him to bear the disappointment of being the deceived instead of the deceiver? If so, it was a mark of maturity.

But Jacob had not given up the pattern of clever bargaining. In his dealings with Laban, who changed his wages ten times in an effort to outmanoeuvre his son-in-law, Jacob used his keen knowledge about cattle-breeding to get a larger share of the flock for himself.

When his growing prosperity created unbearable tension between himself and the sons of Laban, Jacob decided that the time had come to return to his own land. Again, Jacob behaves in a fashion typical for him. Instead of announcing his intention openly to Laban and departing in a dignified fashion befitting the head of a large household, Jacob conspires secretly with his wives and departs stealthily from the home where he had lived for so many years. This need to repeat an early way of behaving should become clearer when considered from a psychoanalytic viewpoint. The same unconscious factors that prompted the earlier flight from Isaac and Esau must have had a share in this one. Let us, however, review the reality factors first.

Jacob might actually have been deterred from his purpose had he told Laban of his plans. But on the other hand Laban and his sons had no rational basis for stopping him or taking by force that which he had legally acquired. And there is no proof that they would have behaved violently toward a man so closely tied to them in kinship. Laban's behavior when he pursues Jacob and makes peace with him confirms this. And where was Jacob's faith in God at this point? Was it not at God's command that he was returning

to Canaan? We must conclude that unconscious, irrational factors connected with the earlier experience had a part in his unseemly flight.

It is on the journey back to his old home that Jacob undergoes the second emotional crisis with which we are chiefly concerned. What was his situation at the time? Jacob had carried out elaborate plans to appease his brother Esau by sending ahead messengers with herds of cattle to be presented to his brother together with most obsequious greetings. During the previous day he had received his answer. Esau was on the way to meet him with four hundred men.

Jacob was in mortal terror. He divided his household into two camps so that if Esau fell upon one part and destroyed it in his anger, the other part might still be saved. Then Jacob sent them all before him across the Jabbok River and he remained alone. He must have felt a great need to be alone on this fateful night, which might be the last night of his life. Having done all he humanly could to avert disaster, Jacob could now give himself up to the inner meaning of this crisis in his life.

It seems inevitable that Jacob should have turned his thoughts to another night, twenty years earlier, when he left his beloved land to which he was now returning. The situation must have had a nightmarish quality, it was so similar in certain respects to that first experience. Again he had deceived a father by leaving without his knowledge and consent. Again he had left behind him angry brothers who felt that he had enriched himself at their expense. And this time he had actually stolen, in a sense, Laban's daughters, one of them the beloved Rachel, who might so easily have represented a mother surrogate to his unconscious. Both Rebekah and Rachel came from the same family, had a similar romantic encounter at the well, were very much alike in character, and both left their families in Haran to dwell in the land of Canaan. A sense of the "uncanny" (6) must indeed have pervaded the soul of Jacob as he camped alone

in the desolate night. He must have experienced that feeling of "deja vue," (7) *I have been here before*, as the emotions of that earlier night rising from repressing rushed over him.

What takes place during this eventful night? The Bible story is a dramatic one. "And there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day." This *man*, held by tradition to be an angel, or God Himself, injures Jacob in the hollow of his thigh after a contest which is described with such ambiguity that it is unclear, at first, who prevails against whom. At the end, Jacob seems to have power over the stranger, who wishes to leave, saying, "Let me go, for the day breaketh." Jacob refuses to let his adversary depart until the latter has blessed him. The mysterious visitant then asks Jacob his name and on being told, replies, "'Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel, for thou has striven with God and with men and hast prevailed.' And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel (Face of God); 'for I have seen God face to face and (yet) my life is preserved.'"

Many biblical commentators of the past have been inclined to regard this episode as a dream. And indeed this seems a logical explanation, considering the state of mind in which Jacob lay down to sleep on that troubled night. How did he deal with the problem in this dream, as we shall assume his experience to be? He is attacked by a *man*, as he expected to be attacked by Esau on the morrow. The explicit use of this word in the Bible, where the concept *angel* is certainly a common one, must have some significance. Yet in the latter part of the dream, the visitor behaves, and is accepted by Jacob, as a heavenly apparition.

We shall begin by assuming that this figure is a composite one to the unconscious of the dreamer. The fear of Esau provided the most direct stimulus for the dream. On

6. Freud, *Collected Papers*, Vol. 4., p. 368

7. Ferenczi, *Further Contributions to the Theory & Technique of P. A.*
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one level, therefore, Jacob may be carrying out the wish to overcome Esau on the morrow. This wish, stemming from the preconscious, may have had the purpose of preparing him for that ordeal, a kind of effort at mastering a coming trauma and a present overwhelming fear. But Jacob may not only have been anticipating what might happen on the morrow, but was also acting out in the dream what might have happened twenty years before and what he may unconsciously have been anticipating all this time. In this association the figure in the dream would represent the feared brother from whom he wished to defend himself.

But on a deeper level, the dream must signify much more. The fear of Esau was closely tied up with guilt feelings toward Isaac, his father, whom he had wronged at the same time. Both of these earlier aggressions were associated in Jacob's unconscious with Oedipal strivings and with the guilt and fear which these wishes aroused. Moreover, Esau in his own person was also a father-imago if, as we assumed before, Jacob had identified with him on such a basis in his childhood.

There was another reason for a reactivation of earlier Oedipal feelings. Jacob was returning home to fulfill his birthright. This time, if God's promise was to be realized, he would soon take the place of his father as the leader of the tribe and possess the land. To the unconscious, this may also have meant to possess the mother. The figure in the dream, therefore, might represent the angry father of the childhood Oedipal conflict who had come to punish him. It also symbolizes the internalized father, who appears in the form of a heavenly visitant, representing his projected super-ego, the Deity Himself.

But the stranger with whom Jacob struggles so desperately must also stand for the dreamer's own id strivings, the personification of his incestuous and aggressive feelings. The mysterious figure thus represents both elements of a conflict — the dangerous forces of the id and the strength of the super-ego. Therefore he is both man and angel at

the same time. Even as within himself Jacob experiences the conflict of different aspects of his personality, so the figure with whom he struggles is a reflected image of himself, with his forces of good and evil engaged in dramatic intrapsychic conflict. Jacob was wrestling with his own projected vision of himself.

A further meaning of Jacob's uncanny guest may be to regard him as a symbol of Death. The situation fittingly calls for such a condensation—death and a father-image were certainly associated in Jacob's mind that night. To the unconscious, death is the punishment for aggression against the father.

What are the elements of the conflict in the dream? The curious ambiguity about the antecedents of the pronouns in the biblical description, "And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was strained as he wrestled with him," has a truly dream-like fluidity which seems to confirm the fact that the dreamer is himself playing several roles. On the one hand, he wishes to overcome his fear of the angry father and to subdue and conquer him. On the other hand, he is afraid of his own id impulses and longs for approval and support from his super-ego.

Only if Jacob can renew his identification with God will he have the courage to meet the angry earthly father-imago in the form of Esau and to lessen the anxiety caused by his guilt feelings. Such an identification must take place through a further subjugation of instinctual forces, hate, aggression, and incestuous wishes. How does this take place in the dream? At first it is not clear who injures whom. But if both combatants are one, and if each symbolizes two aspects of the dreamer's personality, then the confusion about who is hurt is understandable. It may also indicate the uncertainty during the struggle about what the outcome would be. Jacob is injured in the hollow of his thigh, an obvious displacement for the phallus. Out of this conflict of the night, out of fear of the avenging father, out of Jacob's sense

of guilt and wrongdoing, come a solution — not complete submission to the father nor the crime of completely overcoming him. Jacob uses the age-old compromise, submitting to a partial castration, and by thus appeasing his guilt, is able to overcome his fear. It was part of Jacob's pattern of behavior that he met his conflict with active mastery and with compromise, showing his tendency to struggle and his will to survive. Actually, the dream shows with dramatic condensation how castration anxiety brings about the renunciation of guilty wishes and the strengthening of the super-ego, a process which, in Jacob's case, seems to have been renewed and deepened at periods of emotional crises in his life. (8) The sublimation of a part of his instinctual forces was a necessary step to becoming head of his people. (9) Free from fear, and with a new feeling of kinship toward his brother, Jacob could meet him on the morrow with a "conquering love."

The mystery of why it is the heavenly messenger who pleads to be released from the power of Jacob, the one who has suffered the injury, is intriguing. The stranger cries out, "Let me go, for the day breaketh," words which might indeed come from a ghostly apparition who dreads the light of day. If this element of the composite figure in the dream represents the father of the childhood Oedipal conflict, then his ghostly nature is psychologically clear, and he would, of course, vanish in the light of day, as does a troubled dream. (10) But together with this reassuring thought, the dreamer has another source of comfort. In the dream, he has made a further renunciation of his regressive Oedipal wishes; now he need no longer fear the ghost of his father, but can even win love and a blessing from his former rival. And so he demands the blessing as a reward, and in the wording of

8. Freud, S. *The Passing of the Oedipus Complex*, C.P. Vol. 2

9. Freud, S. *Civilization and Its Discontents*

10. Jones, Ernest, *Essays in Applied Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 2, p. 110

Reik, T. *Dogma and Compulsion*

the blessing, the stranger, who came as a *man*, now speaks as the *angel*, or God Himself. Jacob's injury of the flesh, therefore, becomes synonymous with his victory of the spirit.

The change of name, which the form of the blessing takes, expresses this "new," re-born Jacob. The bestowal of a new name has many meanings in the thought of antiquity. One of them indicates the birth of a new personality, a purified soul, a concept involved in the Christian rite of baptism. A new name is given as a part of puberty rites, and in some lands, at the time when a man becomes a father. Jacob's change of name at this period of his life may well signify his new role as father of the children of Israel, spiritual head of his tribe. Another meaning of the change of name might be seen in connection with the superstition that by giving a person a new name one may save him from the danger of imminent death, as in the case of severe illness. For the Angel of Death may be fooled by this device and fail to carry out the fate predestined for one by the former name. Both meanings may be applicable in Jacob's case, although the first mentioned seems to provide the stronger motive. "Isra-el, *"one who strives with God"*, is his new name, and it well befitted the personality of one who had the capacity to meet conflict and crises with striving.

The rabbis have long interpreted Jacob's wrestling with the stranger as a battle between the two natures within Jacob, so that this attempt at a psychoanalytic interpretation serves rather as a different approach leading to the same conclusion. This method, however, offers an opportunity to explain ambiguities and to widen the meaning of the concepts involved, giving a particularized picture rather than a somewhat vague generalization.

One further point in this contest should claim our attention. The children of Israel are prohibited from eating the "hollow of the thigh" of animals, (11) corresponding to the part of the body where Jacob was injured. Dr. Reik

11 Reik, *Op. cit.*, pp. 235-236

believes that we have here a relic of an ancient totemistic legend really belonging to an earlier version of Jacob's wrestling match, in which Jacob injures a deified father. The unconscious association of this event with the primordial legend of the origin of totemism would explain the prohibition to eat the injured portion of the father symbol. (12) (13)

Further meanings might be drawn from this ancient biblical prohibition. In the episode as described, Jacob himself is clearly identified with the animal, a portion of which is prohibited as food because of the injury which Jacob sustains. Jacob thus becomes the symbol of the sacrificial son, who yields up a part of himself to the father. Was not Jacob's own father, Isaac, offered as a sacrifice to God by Abraham!

Among ancient peoples, the first-born son belonged to the gods in a special sense, even to the point of being sacrificed to them. Among the Hebrews, the first-born male of both man and beast was claimed by God. " 'Sanctify unto Me all the first-born; both of man and of beast, it is Mine,' said the Lord." Here, too, an identification is made between the son and the sacrificial animal. The first-born sons were dedicated to priestly service and the first-born animals were offered as sacrifices. Later, the tribe of Levi took over the duties of such sons, but even to this day, in Jewish families, a special ceremony (*Pidyon Ha-ben*) is conducted in which the father pays a small amount of money to free his first-born son from the ancient obligation of priestly service.

Psychoanalytically, this position of the oldest son may be considered as stemming from the ambivalent feelings of the father toward the son who is destined to displace him. Whether the son is sacrificed or sanctified to the Lord's service, he is effectively disposed of. The sacrifice of the son, like the totemistic meal, represents a synthesis of two opposing forces—the hostility to the son in the loving form of a

12. Ibid. p. 248

13. Freud, *Totem and Tabu*

religious rite, and also appeasement to a father-image by a father who remembers his own hostility as a son. "The hollow of the thigh," symbolic of the sacrificial animal, belongs to God and may not be eaten.

A brief comparison of the two dreams of Jacob, separated from each other by twenty years, might be in place here. In both dreams, Jacob makes a renunciation of instinctual wishes, strengthens his identification with God, and receives God's blessing. In the first dream, angels appear upon the ladder, in the second, the stranger behaves as a heavenly visitant, thus confirming the fact that to Jacob's unconscious, the angel represented a projected super-ego.

On the occasion of the first dream, Jacob had escaped from the scene of actual danger. He could therefore turn his energies more to the problem of atonement in the form of a new relationship with God. On the second occasion, Jacob was facing what he believed to be mortal danger. His anxiety on a reality basis was therefore considerably greater. This anxiety finds a needed outlet in the dream in a way which enables the dreamer to take a very active role, that of wrestling. (14) And because the danger is great, the price he is willing to pay is greater than in the first dream.

The different character of the two dreams may be attributed, in part, to the different stages of development in the life of the dreamer. The youthful Jacob faced the problem of repressing his incestuous wishes and re-directing his sexuality into socially permitted channels. Hence the emphasis in the dream is upon the ladder and the angels, and the new relationship with God. But the more mature Jacob, who has come to enter into his inheritance, to become the leader, faced more directly the problem of his aggressiveness and the projected fears of his own hostility in relation to Esau and Isaac. This is adequately expressed by the physical combat with the stranger. It is only when the son

14. Flescher, J. *Mental Health and the Prevention of Neurosis*, Live-right, 1951, p. 124

can overcome the father in physical strength that he shows his fitness to become the head of the tribe. This, together with the power to sublimate part of his strength for social purposes is a necessary development for leadership.

This thought might be further developed by comparing the names of the two places where Jacob underwent his somewhat mystic experiences. The first was called "Bethel," *House of God*, and the second, "Peniel," *Face of God*. The earlier Oedipal experience involved leaving the house of his father, i.e. the mother. He found a substitute House of God in a new, spiritualized identification with the Father-God. Later, the more mature Jacob struggles to renew this identification with God as a necessary condition for spiritual leadership, and by a surrender of a portion of his physical self, his narcissism, he seeks to achieve a greater capacity for sublimation as symbolized by the "Face of God." The displacement from below upward, characteristic of dreams, may indicate Jacob's wish for greater spiritual strength and dependence at this time.

Several other incidents connected with Jacob's return journey lend themselves to interesting speculations. He revisits Bethel and worships there, after exhorting his household to put away any strange gods that they had brought with them from their own homes. This is done in response to God's express command to return to Bethel and worship the God " 'Who appeared unto thee when thou didst flee from the face of Esau, thy brother', and Jacob built an altar there and called the place *El-bethel, the God of Bethel*." Immediately after this, the biblical story records an event that seems strangely unrelated in the context of the story. We are told that Deborah, the nurse of Rebekah, died there

and was buried under an oak, which was then called "the oak of weeping."

No previous mention had been made of Deborah's leaving with Jacob upon his trip to Haran twenty years earlier. She had left Haran with Rebekah at the time of the latter's betrothal to Isaac and no reason is given for assuming that she ever left her mistress again. Why, then, this isolated and unexplained statement about Deborah's death at Bethel? Commentators say that this is interpolated material, not a part of the main narrative. But such interpolations certainly must have some significance from a psychoanalytic point of view. Why was the anachronistic material put into precisely this place? There must have been some unconscious identification on the part of the biblical editors with the hero of their story. At the point where Jacob meets the God of his youth while fleeing from Esau, Deborah, the mother-imago, so closely associated with Rebekah all of Jacob's life, dies and is buried under an oak tree. Is this not a dream-like presentation of the Oedipal conflict and its solution? Jacob is here repeating on his return trip, his original experience at Bethel. In a reconciliation with the spiritualized Father, he repeats once more his renunciation of the mother, who is then buried beneath an oak tree, a father symbol.

It is of interest, also, that shortly after this account, Jacob suffers a real tragedy, an actual giving up, when Rachel, his beloved wife, dies on the journey, following the birth of her second son, Benjamin. Although a small tomb marks the supposed site of Rachel's burial, its real locale is unknown. The fact that her death is related in the story at this particular time may also indicate that Jacob must make this further sacrifice of his still active Oedipal wishes

before he can return and face his father. Thus the death of Deborah may be a kind of preparation, or foreshadowing of the greater tragedy, the death of Rachel; it might have been intended to serve as a propitiatory gesture to ward off the greater sacrifice, but failed in this purpose. The statement about Deborah's death, therefore, although an anachronism on a conscious level, may have the deeper logic of the unconscious.

Even in the tragic event of Rachel's death, Jacob's capacity to make the best of a situation, to strive and to endure, can be seen. Rachel called her son *Ben-oni*, "son of my sorrow," but his father changed it to *Benjamin*, "son of my right hand."

230 Riverside Drive
New York 25, N.Y.